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In Focus

As it's that time of year again, when the Carnatic music world pays homage to the bard from Tiruvaiyaru, Dr. Radha Bhaskar takes a peek under the hood of the ghana raga pancharatnam in *Sri Thyagaraja's Pancharatnam*. Among the melakarta ragas (including the vivadi melas), only a few have been in vogue among musicians and composers. Others have been avoided, either due to personal preference, or due to the difficulty in discerning and depicting their swaroopa. Kotiswara Iyer, on the contrary embraced them, meditated upon them, prayed to Lord Kanda to reveal their essence, and composed kritis in each one of them: indeed, path-breaking work as Vijayalakshmi Subramaniam finds while researching *A Vaggeyakara With A Difference*, a two-part article.

Notation is the key to unlock the first door of a composition, the inner doors, having keys of raaga bhava, laya and sahitya artha. Dr. Bhageerathi traces the evolution of notation technique in 19th and 20th century texts, in a two-part article, *Development of Musical Notation in South Indian Music*. As yet another death anniversary of the evergreen songstress passed by in December, A. Seshan reminisces in his two-part article, *MS – The Eternal Voice*. Dr. Veerapandian takes us on an interesting literary treasure hunt through the Silappadikaram to uncover musical references in a two-part article *Ilakkiya Puthayal*. In this issue, we have an interview of *Vidwan Trichur V. Ramachandran* by Subadra Murthy. As the classical music world thrilled to one of their greatest living musicians being conferred the Bharat Ratna, Irfan Zuberi analyzes his music in '*Pandit Bhimsen Joshi – The Orthodox Revolutionary*'. The raaga which Lalgudi Jayaraman once mentioned as an anytime pick-me-up, Mohanam, is analyzed in *Raga Mohanam-Its Svara Aspects and Starting Point* by S. Lalitha. A maverick genius of a violinist passed away this year and his student Geetha Raja pays homage in *Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan – A Tribute to my Guru*. A musician's quest for recognition is described in *In Search of Recognition* by G. Swaminathan. One of the pillars of the sabha and the Mumbai medical fraternity, Dr. K.S. Varadhachary left us this year. We report on his *Public Condolence Meeting*. A nonagenarian musicologist R.C. Mehta, has had three book releases recently and as icing on the cake, has recently been awarded the Sangeet Natak Academy award and the Padma Bhushan too! Sakuntala Narasimhan reviews two of these books. Nalini Dinesh reports on *happenings at the Sabha and the Vidyalaya*. □

SRI THYAGARAJA'S PANCHARATNAM

by Dr. Radha Bhaskar, Editor, Samudhra

Saint Thyagaraja's aradhana is celebrated very significantly in different parts of Chennai as well as all over India. In recent years, this festival has gained great momentum not only in India but in other parts of the globe too. Though we sing the Pancharatnam routinely as if they are some kind of a ritual, we hardly ponder about the musical and lyrical excellence embedded in these gem compositions. This small write-up aims at detailing the life and contribution of Sri Thyagaraja as well as his Pancharatnam which are so widely sung world-over.

Saint Thyagaraja was born on 4th May 1767. He was so named because he was born in Thiruvavur, containing the great shrine of Thyagaraja. From a very early age, Thyagaraja showed signs of greatness and was brought up with great care by his parents Ramabrahmam and Sitamma. He studied Telugu and Sanskrit under his father and became proficient in these two languages. Thyagaraja learnt music initially from his mother and later from Sonti Venkatramana Das.

Thyagaraja is perhaps the only composer whose compositions are widely learnt, performed and appreciated. There are several reasons for this. The most important is that his songs appeal to the scholar as well as the ordinary rasika as they have a charm and fascination of their own. His compositions are a fine amalgamation of music, sahitya and bhakthi. There is a logical progression of music in the different sections of his compositions, a balanced

presentation of straight and gamaka oriented notes, analytical method of presenting the beauty of various ragas, technical and rhetorical beauties. Above all, his musical style is simple, homely, charming and beautiful. His thousand and odd compositions which have come down to us constitute a colossal monument of musical intelligence and creativity.

Sangatis which are melodic progressions on a line of sahitya, have been best explored by Thyagaraja. His sangatis explore both the raga bhava as well as the artha bhava in a fitting manner.

Most kritis of Thyagaraja are on Lord Rama, though he has also composed songs on other Gods like Ganapati, Krishna, Devi, Hanuman, Venkateswara etc. He has sung the story of the Ramayana through inspiring songs. His picturisation of the human and divine qualities of the Lord are beyond description. With an intimate knowledge of the Ramayana of Valmiki, Tulasidas and Kambar, Thyagaraja has given an alluring and fascinating description of the several episodes in the story. He has analysed the Lord's kalyana gunas and painted them in vivid colours.

Apart from kritis composed by him in various common as well as rare ragas, he



has composed group kritis – a chain of kritis on a particular theme. Group kritis are of interest both from the academic and entertainment part of view. They serve to mirror certain aspects of the composer which may otherwise go unnoticed. The number of kritis constituting a group, are usually five or nine. Thyagaraja has composed sets of five compositions which include - Kovur Pancharatnam, Thiruvotriyur Pancharatnam, Lalgudi Pancharatnam, Srirangam Pancharatnam. His poetic skill, his gift at melody, his capacity to wield the language of music and the exuberance of his musical imagination, are all revealed in an amazing manner in his group kritis.

The Pancharatnam (five gems) in Nata, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali and Sri is Thyagaraja's most scholarly contribution to South Indian music. Unlike the other Pancharatnams, these songs of Thyagaraja share a common bond only in terms of the composition type or format. The theme of each Pancharatna kriti is totally different but all of them, though termed as kritis are more or less in a refined tana varnam format i.e. containing svara passages followed by corresponding sahithya.

There is nothing to surpass these compositions in terms of musical excellence or the flowing character of the sahithya. Even ragas with limited scope like Gaula or Sri become major ragas in his hands. They have all been set to Adi tala, a uniform and easy time measure. It is said that the Pancharatna kriti in Arabhi was Thyagaraja's first composition. They are in a fine blend of Telugu and Sanskrit

language.

These five compositions serve to mirror the depth of his learning and his mastery over Telugu and Sanskrit. These compositions are monumental examples to show how feelings like self introspection, prudence, admiration, joy, humility can be effectively portrayed through appropriate ragas and special phrases.

Lyrical and musical contents of the Pancharatnam

The first kriti Jagadananda karaka in Nattai is basically in praise of the Lord and admits of doxologies. It is suggestive of heroic praise. Nattai raga which suggests Veera rasa is used appropriately for this piece. The whole song along with the pallavi at the conclusion of each charana consists of the 108 names of the Lord Rama. He begins the composition by addressing the Lord as jagadanandakaraka meaning – one who bestows eternal happiness to the whole world and jaya janaki prana – dearest Lord of Janaki.

Then he extols the greatness of the lord and describes his beauty and valor. In the final verse, Thyagaraja says – “you have endless, marvelous, auspicious attributes. Though indescribably glorious and supreme, you are easily accessible to your devotees. You are extolled by your ardent devotee Thyagaraja.”

All the charanas have either shadja or panchama as the starting note.

The second Dudugugala (Goula) is in a very penitent mood. The sahithya is confessional in its tone. Though Thyagaraja himself may not have committed any of the sins mentioned in the song, it indirectly provides

a lesson to others to desist from committing such sins. Thyagaraja says – “tell me, which Prince will come to protect a wasteful and worthless person like me? One who is into wicked deeds, from childhood I have been guilty of scant respect to the sacred names of the Lord. My life has been spent running after wealth. Lord, friend of Thyagaraja, who will come forward to redeem a person like me?”

Most parts of this song hover around the poorvanga of the madhyasthayi and helps in enhancing the sober mood of the song.

Sadhinchene (Arabhi) depicts a totally different theme and is a comment on the deeds and pranks of Lord Krishna. Thyagaraja says – “O mind, verily Lord Krishna has done it. In contradiction to his moralizing lectures, by dubious means, he has achieved his objective by cleverly arguing as the situation has demanded.” He gives various instances where he by not keeping his promise of fulfilling the desires of gopis and making them happy, exposed them to ridicule. Further, “Thinking that Sri Krishna was extremely fond of his devotees, that he was a repository of all virtues, as he who eliminates the effect of kali, when I was contemplating his form, he shattered all my faith and disappointed me, yet he skilfully argued himself out. I would address him as Hari, Ramachandra, Lord of the Raghu race, as one of soft and sweet speech, as one reclining on Adishesha, as one extolled by Brahma, Garuda, and Indra. All the promises would fall on deaf ears and he would not care to protect me.” Finally, Thyagaraja concludes – “it is well known that he is infinitely good, compassionate and righteous. Alas! Who could think that

He could be otherwise. What a revelation?”

The charanas commence on the notes ri, pa and dha. This composition abounds in rhythmic beauty and charm. A striking musical aspect to be noted in this composition is that though the raga Arabhi has the avarohana as “sndpmgrs”, Thyagaraja has omitted the nishada in the avarohana and all phrases in this Pancharathna have the phrase “sdp” only. Yet, the raga Arabhi comes alive in full form and this composition is able to do full justice to the raga bhava in the most exquisite way.

Kanakana ruchira in Varali is couched in complete devotion. In this, Thyagaraja is just overjoyed and filled with emotion on seeing his beloved Lord Rama. He says – “The bliss derived by looking at you is immense and one can never be fully satisfied at any point of time. The more I look at you, the more is my urge to keep looking at you. You look so charming. To be looking at your childlike face, at which charming Sita Devi casts her glance shyly with pride from the corner of her eyes, gives me endless delight.” He then describes the beauty and accomplishments of Rama. He makes a statement that “all this beauty can be experienced only by your true bhakthas, those who seek complete refuge in you.” He finally concludes by saying – “you are one worshipped daily by Thyagaraja, one with the face whose beauty rivals that of the moon, one who bestows boons on bhakthas.”

Endaro mahanubhavulu in Sriraga, the last of the Pancharatnam is composed in all humility and herein the composer pays homage to various types of great men. It says – “I salute every savant and noble man

with utmost humility. I salute those who treasure in their hearts the beautiful form of the Lord and with constant darshana of that form, enjoy supreme bliss. I pay obeisance to those souls who cleverly conceive in their mind's eye, the graceful and charming gait of Sri Rama. I revere those great souls who have delved into the epics like Ramayana, Bhagavata and Gita and the four Vedas, Puranas, Shastras and the six Matas and have understood their essence. They are regarded by Thyagaraja as mentors dear to him. As the reverential affection for the Lord reaches the crescendo, they utter the sacred names of the Lord with abandon. They are the genuine devotees of Sri Rama, praised by Thyagaraja."

The charanas in this Pancharatna kriti commence on the notes sa, ri or pa.

Brief meaning of some other songs which are rendered during the group singing of the Pancharatnam during Thyagaraja Aradhana –

Chetulara – Though this composition is said to be composed originally in Karaharapriya raga, it is now sung in Bhairavi raga only. This is a traditional song which is played on the flute before the Pancharatnam singing commences. Here Thyagaraja says – "O Sri Rama, let me have the ecstatic joy and thrill of decorating you with my own hands in such a way as to

elicit the envy and admiration of Brahma, Indra and others. Once I decorate you, I will feast my eyes on your beauty to my heart's content."

Though there are three charanas, usually the samashti charana is sung. Here Thyagaraja says – "having decorated your head dress with pearls, I shall smear your body with sandal paste made fragrant by the mixture of various scents. Goddess Saraswathi will then come and fan you gently. I shall then exclaim in joy - well done, well done!"

Sri Ganapatini (Raga – Saurashtram) – "Dear devotees, let us pay obeisance to Lord Ganapati, who is dancing prettily after receiving the worship of Brahma and others. Who after partaking of the offering of jack fruit, coconuts, jambu fruit etc. is coming, treading the earth with His heavy sounding steps. He has installed the holy feet of Hari in His heart and is coming dancing in a variety of rhythms. Thyagaraja praises him in all humility, let us pay our respects to the Lord."

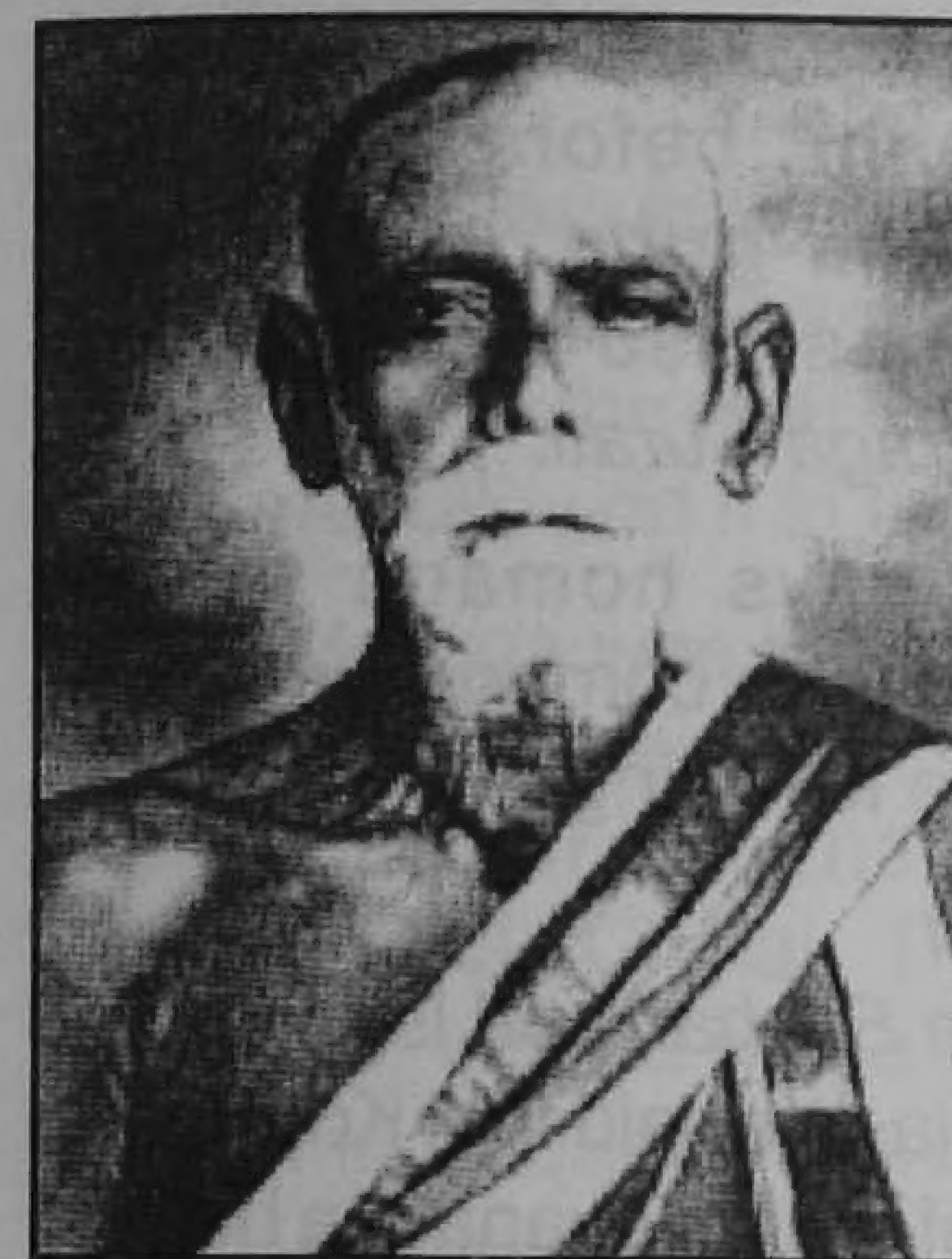
Guruleka (Raga – Gourimanohari) – Here Thyagaraja has focused on the importance of the Guru in one's life. The guru according to Thyagaraja has had spiritual illumination with the divine grace. He is a mentor, and no one however talented and virtuous can get rid of his mental anguish and afflictions without the help of the guru. □

Errata

In Geetha Radhakrishna's review of Pala C.K. Ramachandran's book on Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer in Shanmukha Jul-Sep 2008 issue, page no. 28, the raga of the Swati Tirunal padam *Taruni* has wrongly been mentioned as Nilambari, it should be Dwijavanti, and the raga of another Swati Tirunal padam "*Kanthanodu*" has been wrongly mentioned as Saindhavi, it should be Nilambari.

KOTISWARA IYER (1870 — 1938)a vaggeyakara with a difference (Part-I)

by Vijayalakshmi Subramaniam



Many people remember Kotiswara Iyer as the frail old man lost in deep meditation in front of the Kapaliswara temple in Madras. Few probably realized that

this intensely religious man was a composer of rare merit, who also worked in the Madras High Court as a translator for a living and that music was his passion.

Kotiswara Iyer's musical gifts were a part of a rich cultural heritage. His grandfather was the great Kavi Kunjara Bharathi, a contemporary of the Music Trinity and author of many popular classical and devotional lyrics. Kotiswara Iyer's father Naganatha Iyer of Nandanur village in Ramanathapuram district, was himself a composer in Sanskrit and Tamil.

Kotiswara Iyer had his schooling at Manamadurai and completed college studies at Trichy and Madras. He had his musical training under stalwarts Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar and Patnam Subramania Iyer. His talent for composing expressed itself at an early age. The *Venba* and *Sundareshwara Pathikam* in praise of *Somasundareshwara* of Madurai and *Kayarkanni malai* in praise of *Meenakshi* were his initial compositions.

Kotiswara Iyer composed over 200 songs and earned for himself an enduring place among the galaxy of distinguished composers. While a significant part of it came in the midst of routine unmusical work, the stupendous work on which he staked his claim to immortality, the 72 *Melakarta raga keerthanas* — **Kanda Gaanaamudam** — was composed after his retirement. The major portion of his compositions was in praise of his *Ishta Devata, Murugan*. With the exception of Mahavaidyanatha Iyer's *mela ragamalika*, the credit of rescuing Venkatamakhi's *melakarta* chart from mere existence as a mathematical chart goes to Kotiswara Iyer. Many ragas have established their *swaroopa* through his compositions. In the words of one who had been with him through the toil for this gigantic task — Shri N. Ramakrishnan, former M.P. — "He was the first to compose in these *Kartha ragas* employing *sampoorna prayoga* in both *aarohana* and *avarohana*, giving each of them an identity and form no less distinct than the *rakti ragas* in vogue. He had no *lakshana geetas* of these *kartha ragas* before him to follow and develop. Only the *swara* outlines of the *ragas* were there. So, *swaras* had to be combined and interlinked to form musical phrases, *bhavas* had to be developed and the distinct identity of the *raga* shaped, and then the *nyasa* and *jiva sancharas* with *rakti prayogas* had to be formulated. The *kritis* then had to be composed in flowing *sahitya*, suffused with *bhakti*, delineating the delicate contours of the *raga*."

Kotiswara Iyer had to spend enormous time and mental effort for each composition. That he was aware of the enormity of the task he had set for himself is evident from his initial composition in raga *Hamsadhvani* 'Vaarana mukha', where he says that with the blessings of the Almighty nothing is impossible and he invokes the blessings of the earlier *vaggeyakaras* so that his work may proceed unimpeded. The composition is in the nature of a *Kaappu*.

Kotiswara Iyer's *sahitya* is very classical as well as musical. It provides insight into the personal philosophy of a man who accepted life as it came. It also reflects his extraordinary love for Tamil.

In addition to the *Kanda Gaanamudam*, his tour de force, Kotiswara Iyer has composed many songs in *Janya ragas*. He has also composed songs with emphasis on *tala* intricacies. For instance, the *Begada raga kriti* — *Esan Kanaka Sabesan* — is set in *Adi tala* where the *Eduppu* of each word is 2 *aksharams* after the beat. The song is replete with *raga bhava* and *sahitya soundarya*.

An Analysis of Kotiswara Iyer's compositions:

A look at Kotiswara Iyer's compositions shows us that he composed, in addition to the *Kanda Gaanamudam*, 31 *kritis* and 4 *varnams* in *janya ragas*—*Saveri*, *Kedaragowla*, *Dhanyasi* and *Bilahari*. He has also composed additional songs in the *mela ragas* *Sankarabharanam*, *Todi*, *Kharaharapriya* and *Kalyani*. He has composed in many forms such as 'venba' and 'viruthams'. There are two verses of 'Nerisai venba'—one each before

Varanamukha in *Hamsadhvani* and 'Ayyane' in *Kambhoji*. We find a 'Kattalai kaliturai', before the *kriti* 'Varavenum Vani' in the *raga* *Sankarabharanam* and 'Asiriya virutham' before the song 'Kanakanga sukha guha' in the *raga* *Kanakangi*. He has also composed a *Mangalam* in the *raga* *Surati*.

Kotiswara Iyer pays homage to his predecessors in many compositions. He has composed the following

1. Ini namakkoru

This is in the *raga* *Bilahari* and is in praise of Saint Thyagaraja. It is said that Kotiswara Iyer had a vision of Saint Thyagaraja before commencing his monumental work, the *Kandaganamudam*. He took it as the Saint's approval and blessings for his going ahead with his Magnum Opus.

We also find many influences of Thyagaraja in the *Sangita* and *sahitya* of Kotiswara Iyer's works.

2. Sami Dikshita

This is in the *raga* *Devamanohari* and in praise of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Kotiswara Iyer also shared the honor of departing from this world on the same day as Dikshitar—Deepavali day. Kotiswara Iyer passed away on the Deepavali day on October 20th, 1938.

3. Ranjita Kavi Kunjara

This is in praise of his grandfather, whose name he took as his 'mudra'. This is in the *raga* *Suddha Saveri*.

4. Kai kooda Vendume

In this song in *raga* *Latangi*, set to *Khanda chapu*, he refers to the great Tamil poets Nakkirar and Arunagiri.

Kotiswara Iyer refers to his own 'Kandaganamudam' in many songs like 'Ganamuda panam' in *raga* *Jyotiswarupini*, 'Ganamudam' in *raga* *Salagam*, and 'Karunya kandaganamudam' in *raga* *Dhavalambari*. The *Kandaganamudam* was first published in the year 1932 and the second volume followed it in the year 1938.

Lord Muruga was his *Ishta Devata* and he has composed on the *kshetras* of Tiruchendur, Azhagar Malai and Pazhamudir Chalai. That Kotiswara Iyer was well versed in the *Puranas* is evident from the frequent references he makes to them in his compositions. He has used the 'Bijaksharas' in his song in the *raga* *Jhankaradhwani*.

Hrimkara Jhankaradhwaniyutha Om kara nadavandar poompada

He has incorporated the *raga mudra* too beautifully in this phrase.

Very often he also asks for 'knowledge of good music with *laya*' as in the *Jyotiswarupini* song, where he says in the *charanam*—

Sollamuthodu nallupakarangalal Sruti laya modu navarasamurave

He speaks about the *Saptaswaras* and music in many songs. In his *kriti* in the *raga* *Rishabhapriya*, he says -

Shadja rishabha priya gandhara madhyama Panchama dhaivata nishadhavitha Sapta swara sangita.....

In the *anupallavi* of the same song he speaks of the requirements of good music—

Kani naya solporul gana gambhiram Ininaya srutiyodiyai laya dhira

Kotiswara Iyer has followed the prose method of composing like many of his predecessors. The *Tallapaka* composers were the earliest to adopt this method. Tamil composers like Arunachala Kavi, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Kavi Kunjara Bharati and his own contemporary, Papanasam Sivan have also sung in this method. His compositions are replete with embellishments like *Yati*, *prasa*, *yamaka*, etc.

Muthuswami Dikshitar was among the earliest to compose in the *mela ragas* but his approach was one of 'vakra' and 'varjya' *prayogas*. He has composed in a total of 193 *ragas*, about 493 compositions. Of these, 423 are in *Shuddha madhyama ragas* and 56 are in *Pratimadhyama*. He followed the *Kanakambari*—*Phenadyuti* classification of *ragas*.

Dikshitar's handling of the *Raganga ragas* is so exemplary that we find minimum distortion of his *kritis* today. The *sangat*s are etched clearly with no scope for ambiguity, even in rare *ragas*. For instance, in the 71st *mela raga*, *Kosalam*, Dikshitar has composed in 'Kusumakaram'. He approaches the R3 or *Shatsruti Rishabha* from the *pratimadhyama* itself.

P M R G S

In such a case, the possibility of the R3 becoming R2 or R1 is minimal. We must remember that Dikshitar lived at a time when there was largely only an oral tradition of transmitting music and very negligible amount of written documentation. Under such circumstances, it is indeed an achievement to have maintained such distinction. He has followed the same *Vakra prayogas* in his composition 'Matangi

Marakataangi in the raga *Dhauta Panchamam* (*Dhatuvaradhan* 69). This approach is commonly found in his handling of *vivadi* ragas. Even in known or familiar ragas, his *prayogas* preempt any confusion or possible misunderstandings. Dikshitar has composed in 40 of the 72 *mela* ragas. Some are *Nasamani* (*Nasikabhushani*), *Phenadyuti* (*Ratnangi*), *Sailadesakshi* (*Sulini*) and *Bhogachayanata* (*Vagadheeswari*).

A look at Thyagaraja's compositions in the *melakarta* ragas shows us that Thyagaraja pioneered the use of several *janaka* ragas like *Ramapriya* (52), *Dhenuka* (9), *Kiravani* (21) and *Chakravakam* (16)

Thyagaraja has also composed in about 18 *vivadi* ragas. **'Vachama gocharam'** in raga *Kaikavasi*, **'Edari sancharintuvo'** in *Srutiranjani* (*Kantamani*)

'Parihasakama' in *Vanaspati*, **'Sattaleni'** in *Naganandini*, **'Evvare Ramayya'** in *Gangeyabhushani*, **'Dayajucutakithi'** in *Ganavaridhi*, **'Leelaganujuche'** in *Dundubhi* (*Bhavapriya*), **'Lemidelpa'** in *Navaneetham*, and **'Paramathmudu'** in *Vagadheeswari* are such examples.

Thyagaraja uses a combination of the *'sampoorna'* and the *'vakra-varjya'* *prayogas*.

But Kotiswara Iyer uses almost entirely and deliberately the *'Sampoorna'* *prayogas* approach. This is a demanding task and Kotiswara Iyer has taken on the challenge bravely. There are many *ragas* where he did not have any compositions to go by and had to meditate on the *raga* form before he could create a composition in it. He has included *Chittaiswarams* in almost all his songs, perhaps to elucidate the *raga swaroopa*.

To be continued.....

INAUGURATED

The Sri Shanmukhananda Kanchi Mahaswami Sangeetha Sangrahalaya was inaugurated by His Holiness Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal. The Sangrahalaya is equipped with state of the art technology for searching (by artiste / raga / song / accompaying srliste), retrieving and listening to about 20,000 hours of classical music (both vocal and instrumental), Harikatha, lecdems, etc. What's more, it is aimed to further increase the size of the database to 1,00,000 hours of listening pleasure. The Sangrahalaya, equipped with 12 listening stations with earphones as also an audio - video room with screening facility, provides a veritable musical feast of all-time great artistes.

DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL NOTATION IN SOUTH INDIAN MUSIC IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES (Part-1)

by Dr. M. A. Bhageerathi, Lecturer in Music, Queen Mary's College, Chennai.

Musical notation is a representation of music in writing using various symbols and signs. In other words, the music that is sung or played is translated into a visible form. Music sung or played by human beings, is termed as performance. If the same music is written down, using special symbols, then it is called as notation. Music has a language of its own. Each region has its own classical music. The western classical music uses what is known as the **staff notation**. Staff notation is more of a graphic representation. The notation suggests the contour that a melody takes. The Indian classical music has two main divisions, namely the Hindustāni music and the South Indian Music, popularly known as the Karnātik music. Each system has developed its own way of writing down what is generally performed or composed. The South Indian Music possesses a highly developed scientific system of writing down, what is sung or played. This type of writing down, what is rendered, is termed as **Musicography**, by Professor Sāmbamūrti. Popular journals like the Journal of Music Academy, have some of the kṛitis of Muttusvāmi Dīkshitar, published with notation. Notation helps in preserving the compositions of eminent composers. Notation helps a learner additionally, when he hears the same composition in recorded version.

Music was handed down for centuries by word of mouth. Students learnt the compositions by rote. No recording was

done in those days. A best example one can think of is the **oduvār tradition**, in the sphere of **Tēvāram music**. But for this the original tunes would not have been preserved. But, due to the absence of such a tradition, the original tunes of Divyaprabandham are not preserved. Had they been notated, we would have got the original tune. Due to this, the need for notating compositions arose. The art of writing the compositions in the notation form developed in a gradual manner. Here an attempt is made to analyse the development of notation in South Indian Music, with special reference to 19th and 20th centuries. A brief analysis of notation in ancient and medieval period is also made.

Notation in ancient and medieval period:

Notation in some form or the other existed from time immemorial. When the sāman scale emerged, the music was remembered with the help of Sāma hasta. Sāma hasta is the use of hand and the five fingers, to remember the note at which the Sāmans are to be chanted. Hasta, in Sanskrit, gives the meaning hand. Sāma hasta is the use of hand for Sāman chants. In this case the music is not written down, but remembered with the help of the Sāma hasta. An example may be given in this regard.

The notes were given the names Krusita, Prathama, Dvitiya, Tritiya, Chaturtha, Mandra and Atisvārya. These were equivalent to Ma, Ga, Ri, Sa, Ni, Dha and

Pa respectively, according to Professor Sāmbamūrti. But according to Dr. V. Premalatha, these were equivalent to Pa, Ma, Ga, Ri, Sa, Ni and Dha respectively. In sāma hasta, Krusita was remembered by lifting the thumb to a greater angle from the index finger. The thumb being raised at a small angle from the index finger indicated Prathama. Likewise all the svaras were remembered.

According to Dr. V. Premelatha, the following notation was used to remember the svaras.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
M	G	R	S	N	Dha	Pa

This establishes the fact that some form of notation existed from the days of Sāma gāna. Next come the Kuḍimiāmalai inscriptions. These inscriptions give the varieties of a note, for the first time, by resorting to the vowel change in the name of the note. The variations in rsabha were indicated by the change in the name of the note. It is as follows:

Ra Ri Ru Rē

Matanga, Sārngadēva, and Somanātha have given the svara notation. In texts like Sangīta Ratnākara, the svaras were written in the Dēvanāgarī script. Below the svaras the words were written. The songs were given as examples for various melodies.

No.	Name of the book	Author
1	Sangīta Sarvārtha Sāra Sangrahamu	Vīna Rāmānuja
2	The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and Deccan	C.R.Day
3	Hindu Music Self Instructor	T. M. Venkaṭēsa Sāstri
4	Cura Sangīta Ratnākaram	Azhagarsāmi

Sārngadēva uses the dot. He also uses the short and long letters to indicate one unit and two units. Hence, there is evidence to prove that even during the medieval period, the habit of writing the notation for the compositions existed. In Rāgavibodha of Somanātha special signs are found for indicating the 22 vādāna bhēdas or the 22 ways of playing the musical instrument.

But the art of writing notation developed rapidly only during the 19th and 20th centuries. Hence a detailed analysis is made, pertaining to that period.

Notation during 19th and 20th centuries:

The analysis probably can be done starting with the notating of the krtis of Tyāgarāja, one of our great composers. Tyāgarāja's compositions were written down in notation on palm leaves. On palm leaves, it was risky to insert dots and lines. Hence dots were not put. The madhyama kāla svaras were indicated by putting them within single quotation marks. When paper came into vogue, publications were undertaken. Many books on music were published with notation. The way of writing the notation also improved, with each publication. A detailed analysis of this follows:

Following are some of the texts, which have been perused to analyse the changes that have taken place in writing the notation.

5	Oriental Music in European Notation	A. M. Chinnasāmi Mudālīār
6	Sangīta Candrikai	S. Māṇikkamudaliār
7	Gāyaka Siddhāñjanam and other books	Tacchūru brothers
8	Sangīta Sampradāya Pradarsinī	Subbarāma Dīkṣitar
9	Sangītānubhavasāra sangrahamu	Perungulam Srinivāsaiyengār
10	K.V.Srīnivasa Iyengār's books	K.V.Srīnivāsa Iyengār
11	Srī Kṛtīmañimālai	Rangarāmānuja Iyengār
12	South Indian Music and other books	Professor Sāmbamūrti
13	Kṛtis of Syāmā Sāstri and other books	Vidhya shankar
14	Varṇamañjari and other books	T.K.Govindarao

Types of notation:

Notation is generally of two types. One is the prescriptive notation and the other is descriptive notation. For a beginner in Karnāṭic music, a SRGM notation indicating the plain notes will suffice. But as one advances in learning, say gītams or varṇams, there are oscillations of different types involved.

Take for instance the vanajākṣi varṇam.

In this varṇam, in the prayoga s S s n d- r s n there is a movement from d to r and it is dr s and not simply r. If the notation is prescriptive then it simply mentions r. If it is descriptive notation then the notation gives the gamakas and anusvaras.

Initially many books gave only prescriptive notation. But texts like Oriental Music in European notation, Sampradāya Pradarshini and Svayambhodini give descriptive notation, though the extent of description differs.

After taking into account the above facts, the following factors may be considered while analysing the notation.

Factors to be considered while analysing the notation:

1. Preliminary Information:

How the introduction to the melody is given. This pertains to the presentation of information before the actual composition is presented.

2. Melody and duration:

- How the duration of the melody is presented and what are the symbols used for increasing the duration by a unit.
- How the octave of the svaras are indicated.
- Symbols used for presenting various angas of a tāla.
- Symbols used for indicating the beginning and end of the āvartas.
- Gamaka signs used.
- Adaptation of staff notation.
- Symbols like horizontal lines used for increasing the speed of the phrases.
- Other peculiarities used.

3. Text:

- Language used.
- Way of presenting vowel extension.

Analysis is done broadly under the three main headings mentioned above.

1. Sangīta Sarvārtha Sāra Sangrahamu of Vīna Rāmānuja Iyengār:

(a) Presentation of preliminary information:

Before the composition begins, the rāga and tāla are given.

b) Melodic Aspect and Duration:

In this book the svaras are presented in Telugu letters. Variety of the note is not indicated. The author does not use any symbol to indicate the octave. Hṛsva letters indicate one akṣarakāla and long letters indicate duration of two akṣarakālas. Comma indicates only the repetition of a particular section. No symbol is used for increasing the duration by one unit or two units. No symbol is used for marking the speed of the composition. No gamaka signs are used. The end of a phrase is marked by a hyphen. Two vertical lines are used for marking the end of an āvarta.

(c) Text:

The language used is completely Telugu. This holds well right from the title of the text. Vowels are extended using the alphabets.

The notation given in this book certainly comes under the category of prescriptive notation.

2. The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and Deccan:**(a) Presentation of preliminary information:**

The rāga, tāla and the starting words of the composition are given.

(b) Melodic Aspect and duration:

This is completely given in western staff notation. The sangatis are

indicated with Arabic numerals. The words, Pallavi, Anupallavi and Stanzas indicate the division of the melody into various sections. Drawing a single vertical line indicated the tāla divisions. End of an āvarta is marked by drawing two small vertical lines.

(c) Text: No attempt is made to write the text of the songs, excepting the starting words.

The Western way of representing S R G M P D N as C D E F G A B is followed, while explaining the 72 mēla scheme. Some of the starting words have been printed in a manner not generally acceptable. For instance the popular mangaLam of Tyāgarāja is given as **paramana suttu battu padara**. The names of the composers are seldom mentioned.

3. Hindu Music Self Instructor

This book is in Telugu language. The name of the book itself suggests that it helps in learning by oneself, because of the clarity adopted in notating the compositions. This, in fact, shows the usefulness of the method adopted by the author of this book, even in the present day context.

(a) Presentation of preliminary information: The name of the musical form is given at the top. Then the name of the rāga and the tāla are mentioned. The name of the composer is given.

The Arohaṇa and Avarohaṇa are given within boxes. An example may be given.

Rāga Nāṭa:

S			R	G	M		P			D	N	S
---	--	--	---	---	---	--	---	--	--	---	---	---

(a) Melodic aspect and duration:

The svaras are represented by Telugu alphabets. The western notation is combined with the svaras. The symbol # is used to indicate the sharpness of the note. Similarly the symbol b indicated flat svaras. Dots are used for indicating the sthāyi or octave. A dot above the svara indicates higher octave and a dot below indicates lower octave. Hṛsva letters indicate one akṣarakāla and Dīrgha letters indicate two akṣarakāla. Drawing lines above the svaras reduces the duration. A single vertical line indicates the subdivision of a tāla, in a melody, as |. The completion of an āvarta is indicated by drawing two vertical lines, as ||. A slur indicated that the svaras over which the slur was drawn, have to be played in a single stroke in instruments like Vīṇa or Violin. This may probably be taken as the mark to indicate the phrases also. Asterisk mark, * and ditto mark were used to indicate the portion of the pallavi in the composition, that has to be repeated after singing the anupallavi or the caraṇa of a composition. No commas or semicolons are used for increasing the duration. No gamaka signs are used. Special signs were used for indicating rests in the first speed, second speed etc. They are as follows:

First Speed: —

Second speed: +

Third speed: ++

Fourth speed: +++

Fifth speed: ++++

(b) Text:

The text of the compositions is printed in Telugu. Vowel extension was indicated by the alphabets in the language.

To some extent the notation seems to be descriptive.

4. Cura Sangīta Ratnākaram:

Azhagarsvāmi has written this book. It consists of two volumes. Since this is a Tamizh book, Tamizh characters are used.

(a) Presentation of preliminary information:

In this book, the page is divided into two parts. On the left-hand side, information is given in Tamizh and on the right hand side information is given in Telugu. The name of the musical form is first indicated. Then comes the name of the rāga and the tāla. This is followed by presentation of just the text of the song. The text is presented with the divisions, pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa. Then comes the actual presentation of the melody, only in Tamizh.

(b) Melodic Aspect and duration:

To represent the svaras, the Tamizh characters are used. A dot placed above the svara indicated higher octave and a dot placed below indicated lower octave. Short alphabets indicated one unit of time and long alphabets indicated two units, in the case of svaras. For increasing more than 2 units a small

circle is used 0. **No horizontal line is used, for increasing the speed.**

For dividing the angas in a tāla, the signs used are +, x, †, -, ∪ and m. The signs x, +, and † represent the beat. The sign ∪ represents the finger count and the sign m is used for indicating the wave of hand. Sangatis are given number in Arabic numerals. No gamaka signs are used.

Text:

The language in which the text is given is Tamizh. Vowels are extended with the help of alphabets.

5. Oriental Music in European Notation:

This book was authored by A.M.Chinnasvāmimudaliār. He uses completely western notation. The book is written in English.

(a) Presentation of preliminary information:

For the song Sariyevvarē of Tyāgarāja, before giving the song in notation, the following information is given.

Mēla: Kharaharapriya (The same information is repeated in Telugu and Tamizh below the English version). The serial number of the mēla? is given in Arabic numerals, within parenthesis.

RAGA: Srīranjani (The same information is repeated in Telugu and in Tamizh below the English version).

TALA: Dēsādi (This information also is repeated in Telugu and in Tamizh). Mudaliār mentions this rāga as a varja rāga. He mentions that the dēsādi tāla has a total of 4+4=8 crochets.

On the right hand side he gives the following information:

Music and words by: Tyāgarājayya

Counts by quaver = Met. = 144

Style of execution: Dolcissimo

Then he gives the ārohaṇa and avarohaṇa in staff notation. Below the staff notation, the svaras are given in English, Telugu and Tamizh respectively. The svaras are given with the sankēta akṣaras to indicate the svarasthānas, as follows:

SA RI GI MA ■ DHI NI SA. SA NI DHI ■ MA RI GI RI SA. Instead of PA the darkened square is used if the rāga is PA varja. The speed, with which the melody is to be executed, is indicated as Count by quavers: Met. ♩ = 100. This probably is the first book to indicate the speed clearly.

(b) Melodic Aspect and duration:

The melody is given completely in western notation. Since western notation is graphic in nature, it is easy to judge, how the melody flows. But a person familiar with the usage of the svaras in Karnāṭic music can certainly indicate the flow of the melody using the SRGM notation. Completion of an āvarta is marked by two small vertical lines (||) and the division between each anga is marked by a small single vertical line (|). Though he gives gamaka signs like ~, w, he has not applied them while giving the notation for the compositions.

(c) Text:

The text is completely printed in English with diacritical markings. Below the text in English the texts of the songs are given in Dēvanāgarī script also. If the sāhitya starts as 'Sari' then it is printed in the Dēvanāgarī

script. The text is printed below the melody, which is in staff notation. Probably this book is second only to Day's book in using the western way of notation.

The notation given in this book seems to be more of descriptive nature.

6. Sangīta Candrikai

This is the work of S. Mānickamudaliār, in Tamizh, written in the year 1902.

(a) Presentation of preliminary information:

The Tamizh alphabets are used to indicate the svaras. The Rāga, Tāla and the chanda are mentioned as follows:

28. Harikāmbhodi mēlam. Tiśra ēkam | Tanana nanana | Vāippāḍu

Rāgam Yadukulakāmbhodi

And the svarasthānas of the rāga are indicated as follows:

	Ri		Ga	Ma		Pa		Dha	Ni		Sa
--	----	--	----	----	--	----	--	-----	----	--	----

(b) Melodic Aspect and duration:

A dot above the svara indicates higher octave and a dot below the svara indicates lower octave. Svaras of the madhyasthāyi have no dots at all. **The words are written first and below the words the svaras are typed.** Short alphabets indicate one unit of duration and long alphabets indicate two units. Vowel extensions of the svaras are also used for increasing the duration by one unit. No commas or semicolons are used for increasing the unit of time. A small vertical line (|) is used for divide the angas in a tāla. Mānickamudaliār uses a technique like writing the foot notes. For indicating that there is a footnote, he uses the asterisk mark * in the melody. No gamaka signs are used. But the way of singing a note or a

phrase, is explained at the end of the respective page. An example may be given below:

*Indakkurippukkuppinnulla svarattai idarmunnalla svaratilirundu izhukka.

³Mā Pā Pa¹

This is the svara notation given. He then gives the explanation for the superscripts at the end of the page as follows:

1. Mā – Pā – Nī – yai aḍikka.
3. Mā – vai dha – vilirundizhukka.

Text:

The text or the sāhitya is given in Tamizh language. Vowels are used for extending the words. Tēvārams, Aruṭpās and his own compositions are given in notation.

The notation in this work seems to be more of a prescriptive nature.

7. Contribution of the Tacchūru brothers:

The Tacchūru brothers have written graded books on Music. They have written many books on music like the Svaramanjari, Gāyakapārijātam, Sangita Kalānidhi, Gāyakalācanamu, Gānāndusākaram etc. All these books are written in Telugu. They have started writing books from the second half of the 19th century and have continued it till the first half of the 20th century. Their contribution towards notation is compiled from GāyakaSiddhānjanam Part I and II, Sangita Kalānidhi and Gānāndusākaram.

(a) Presentation of preliminary information:

The name of the rāga and the tāla are mentioned at the top of the composition. An example may be given below:

1. Gūrjari - (Janyamu) - Tripuṭa
2. 72 Rasikapriya – (Mēlakarta) – Tripuṭa

Melodic aspect and duration:

The Telugu alphabets are used for giving the melodic aspects. Dots are used for indicating the octaves. A higher octave is indicated by a dot above the svara and a lower octave is indicated by a dot below the svara.

Short alphabets indicated one unit of time and long alphabets used in svaras indicated two units. **There is no symbol used for increasing the duration by more than two units. Comma** is used for increasing the unit of time by one unit, only in **Sangīta Kalānidhi**. At the beginning of the chapter itself the name of the composer is given. An example is given below:

Tyāgayagārikṛtulu

Two small vertical lines mark the end of the

composition (||). **Hyphens** are used to indicate phrase endings. Horizontal lines are used in **Sangīta Kalānidhi**, above the svaras to increase the speed. If the pallavi is to be repeated after anupallavi, then the starting words are printed along with notation for the same, after the end of the anupallavi, within brackets. **No gamaka** sign is used. The sangatis are indicated by Telugu numerals.

Text:

The language used for writing the words in the composition is Telugu. If vowels are extended, it is pointed out as **kaaaa** etc.

The notation given by Tacchūrū brothers can be considered to be more of a prescriptive nature.

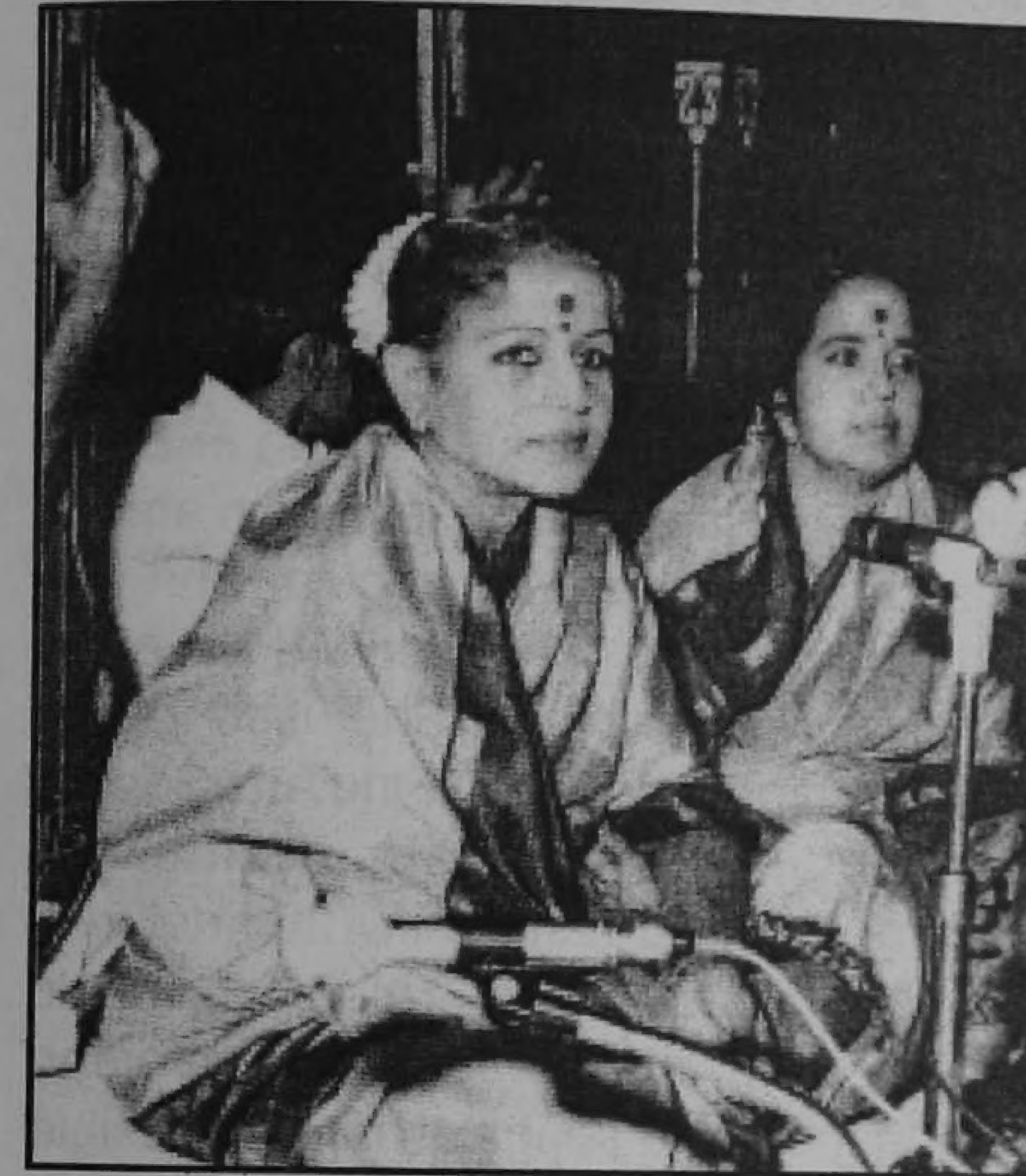
To be continued....

SHANMUKHANANDA AWARDS

- Sri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award for 2008 for Lifetime Achievement and honorary patronship has been conferred on Smt Girija Devi, veteran Hindustani vocalist and thumri specialist.
- Sri Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani awards were conferred on Carnatic vocalists Smt. Gayatri Venkataraghavan, Priya sisters (Smt Haripriya and Smt Shanmukhapriya) and Carnatic violinists Akkarai sisters (S.Subhalakshmi and S. Sornalatha)
- Renowned violinist Shri Lalgudi G Jayaraman is to be conferred with Shri Shanmukhananda Special National Eminence Award (Lifetime Achievement) and Honorary Patronship.

M.S. - THE ETERNAL VOICE

by A. Seshan



Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi in concert at Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha

The earliest songs of M. S. Subbulakshmi broadcast on the All India Radio (AIR, now Akashvani) that this writer remembers are those on 78 rpm records. They are "*Vanattin meedu*" (Mand) of Ramalinga Swamigal and "*Vandina muralum solai*" (Todi) of Tondaradippodi Azhwar in Tamil. By then she had already cut several records including songs in Hindi. It would be interesting to study the evolution and development of the timbre of her voice over several decades. To her fans who have heard her Meera bhajans the early Hindi records ("*Naina naina*" and "*Ek sahara tera*") may not be recognisable as carrying the voice of MS! In course of time it gained in maturity, tonal quality and strength while retaining the mellifluousness noted right

from the beginning. In this writer's view the peak of her form was reached between 1940 and 1965, when she was in the full bloom of her youth and voice. To appreciate this observation one has to listen to records of this period some of which are: "*Pyare darshan*" (Hindi bhajan), "*Oli padaittha*" and "*Mannum imaya malai*", the last two of Bharatiyar, "*Tavamum palittatamma*" and "*Deivattamizh nattinile*" of Kalki and "*Brochevarevarura*" of Mysore Vasudevachar. T. Chowdiah accompanied her on the violin in the last disc. Her Meera records belong to this period. As she aged, she preferred to give performances without straining her voice. In the video cassette of one of her last concerts, in this instance for raising funds for the Kanchi Mahaswami Manimantapam project, on June 29, 1997 at the Music Academy, Chennai, when she was around 80 years old, she was subdued while there was no diminution in her vidwat or the magic of her music. It was the mellow grandeur of the setting sun. A few years earlier she had a proposal to cut three LP records of Bharatiyar's songs to commemorate his birth centenary (1982). The first volume was brought out in 1983. This writer was horrified to see its going on sale with a discount in price at a local shop - something he had not seen happening to an MS record till then. The problem was that she had reduced her sruti from its lofty height. Her voice sounded flat. There was no 'fire' in her rendition, something that had thrilled the listener in "*Olipadaittha kanninai va va va*". She decided to give up recording

the remaining two volumes.

This writer had heard MS on AIR's programmes from his young days. The big vegetable market place (santhai in Tamil) near North Veli Street, Madurai, his home town, used to be full with the members of the public gathered to listen to her concerts through the medium of the loud speakers provided by the municipality. It looked like some national leader addressing a public meeting! (The market was convened only twice a week. On other days it was a public *maidan*.) There was one interesting episode relating to her AIR concerts. In this instance she was billed to perform and this writer could listen at home only after the concert had begun. So he missed the announcement of the names of artistes at the beginning. It had all the charm of a standard MS concert. But he was surprised when at the end AIR gave the name of the singer as N. C. Vasanthakokilam! This musician who died at a young age had the timbre of the voice of MS.

The first live concert of MS that this writer attended was in Rasika Ranjani Sabha (RRS) in Mylapore, Madras (now Chennai), in 1954. It was arranged in connection with a function to felicitate her for the award of Padma Bhushan by the Government of India. T. L. Venkatarama Iyer, the musicologist and jurist, who presided over the function midway through the concert, spoke of the "fort of Saurashtram" ("*Saurashtrakkottai*") she had constructed at the start to house all the precious kritis that she sang subsequently. Kalki responded on behalf of MS. He said that he should only talk and MS should only sing! It was a convention for MS to introduce

one or two new songs in almost every concert. They might have been in circulation but to be rendered by her was like an arangetram (the first performance or debuting of an artiste on stage) for them! The concert at RRS saw the arangetram of two kritis that became popular later, viz., "*Srirangapura Vihara*" of Dikshitar in Brindavana Saranga and "*Shambo Mahadeva*" of Neelakanta Sivan in Bauli. Although these songs were known among musicians they became popular and part of their repertoire only after MS gave her personal touch to them. She used to sing at Music Academy, Indian Fine Arts Society and Tamil Isai Sangam during the December music festival in Chennai with intervals of a few days. This writer could observe that she scrupulously avoided singing the same songs as far as possible except for the ever-popular items which rasikas wanted to hear.

The standing of MS in officialdom was such that she was not treated just like any other musician. This writer remembers one occasion to illustrate this. During a December music festival in Chennai she started singing "*Jagadoddharana*" of Purandaradasa a couple of minutes before 9 PM. The concert was being relayed over AIR, Madras. It was time for the English news at 9 PM. The news broadcasts had a certain sanctity attached to them and they had to be broadcast as scheduled. In the normal course, the broadcaster would have choked off the voice of the singer or speaker exactly at 9 PM to facilitate the relay of news from Delhi. But in the above-mentioned instance, perhaps for the first time, the news was given the go-by and not only the full

song but the remaining part of the concert was also broadcast till Mangalam. It was appreciated all over the Carnatic music world wherever it could be heard. Knowing the standing of MS in officialdom Ariyakkudi was once reported to have demanded that he would sing on AIR only if he was paid one rupee more than MS! This is, of course, an apocryphal story.

As one with a rich experience in the advertisement departments of Ananda Vikatan and Kalki, T. Sadasivam, husband of MS, knew the technique of marketing. The releases of LPs of MS were occasions for the celebration of Carnatic music. Eminent personalities presided over the public functions got up for the purpose. They helped in publicising records and collecting money for leading institutions and temples to which she gifted the royalties. The royalties collected every year even now by the Tirupati Devasthanam on her rendering of Sri Venkatesa Suprabhatam run into crores of rupees. In fact, if the market is flooded with religious music and shlokas today, it is due to the trail blazed by MS.

During his days as a student at the Madras Christian College, Tambaram, during 1953-55 this writer used to visit far-off places like Mylapore and George Town to listen to the concerts of MS and Semmangudi. It was always a musically rewarding experience justifying the time and effort involved in the journey. "House full" placards were seen at such concerts. The only personal contact he had with her and Sadasivam was when they were gracious enough to attend his wedding reception in Madras in 1961. This writer has heard from family circles that MS

gave vocal support to her mother Shanmukhavadvu on the veena at a concert on the occasion of the wedding of his parents in Sivagangai, arranged by his maternal grandfather A. Somasundaram Iyer, a leading lawyer in Madurai-Ramanathapuram Districts of Tamil Nadu with rich clients in Chettinadu.

MS Bani

Is there an MS bani in Carnatic music? Some would say that since she learnt from several sources her style is a healthy amalgam of all of them. But, there were certain definite strands in her music some of which were once unique but have since become part of the standard fare in the concerts of others. One is the reciting of a viruttam, a shloka or a Tamil poem in order to create the ambience for the song to follow. A good example is the shloka of Appayya Dikshitar which ends in "Sambo" after reciting which she used to sing "Sambo Mahadeva" in Bauli. Listen to her record of "Sentamizh nadenum pothinile", which is preceded by "Yam arinda mozhigalile" in the form of a viruttam, both by Bharatiyar. The take-off on "Sentamizh nadenum" in the upper octave continues to thrill me even today after having heard it many times over the decades. But the more substantive elements of her style were the gradual building up of a raga in an alapana, note by note. It is a step-by-step construction of the edifice of the raga with emphasis on jeeva swaras with appropriate emphasis on those prayogas and gamakas that lend identity to the melody. She would cover all the three octaves going up to the tara panchamam in such ragas as Kalyani or Sankarabharanam. She would always

offer a new song or raga (in the sense of rarely heard) in every concert. "Vachama" in Kaikavasi is a good example. Apart from alapana, niraval was her forte. It was elaborate. How many times one has heard her niraval on "Kadambavana nilaye" in the Saveri piece ("Sri Kamakoti") with admiration. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever!

In 1968 when she was conferred the title of Sangita Kalanidhi she sang the first two chakras, each with six ragas, of the Melakarta Ragamalikai of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer at the Music Academy. I remember how rasikas who had not heard that masterpiece welcomed it with a thunderous ovation. Systematically she sang two consecutive chakras during every subsequent year at the Academy during the December festival thus completing the full text of 72 ragas in 6 years. Later she recorded the whole kriti in a cassette that became the best seller of the year in Carnatic classical music. What a great service she has rendered to the Carnatic music world by making the pathantara of the magnum opus of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer available for ever! One can appreciate this only if one realises the countless gems of the past lost by default. In the same concert she sprang a pleasant surprise on listeners by rendering the Dhanasri tillana of Swati Tirunal with its complex and beautiful jatis. Very few had been aware of that tillana till then. Now it is heard both in music and dance programmes.

Her style was a good mixture of both the nagaswaram and veenai styles, as in the case of her mentor Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. Long karvais and tuneful anuswaram-

laden gamakas marked her music. She had the benefit of training in veenai both under her mother in her younger days and later under K S Narayanaswamy. Modulation of the voice at the appropriate places is another noteworthy aspect.

She paid great attention to pronunciation in whatever language she sang. For this as well as learning new kritis she did not hesitate to approach vidwans and vidushis much junior to her. They considered it a privilege to help her. As in the case of D K Pattammal, one could write down the lyric when she sang. Adherence to sruti was of prime importance to her. It was reported that even as a teenager she would practice 'sa' and 'pa' with tambura first and then do it without the drone to check whether she got it right. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, himself a master of sruti, once called her "Subbalakshmi Suswaralakshmi".

Her approach to rhythm was simple and not hard on the rasikas. She avoided kanakku (mathematically-oriented rhythm) although she had shown her prowess in this area too occasionally in the Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi section. She adhered to the traditional practice of counting talas with their angas. Her swara exercises were restrained.

According to Gowri Ramnarayan, MS said: "The ragaswarupa must be established at once. Don't keep the listener in suspense as to whether it is Purvikalyani or Pantuvarali. This difference must come through in the way you dwell on the notes common to both ragas, even before the introduction of dissimilar notes. In Sankarabharanam stress the rishabha, but in Kalyani accent the gandhara quickly."

(Frontline, December 31, 1993)

How appropriately she has given the advice! The same swara prayoga "sa ri ga" can be used both in Kalyani and Sankarabharanam but still the difference could be brought out by following her advice. Kampita gamaka for rishabam will bring out the essence of Sankarabharanam; so is the case of gamaka for gandharam to identify Kalyani.

Sruti, India's premier music and dance magazine, conducted an essay competition on the music of MS. This writer's contribution was selected for the prize of one year's free subscription to the magazine by C V Narasimhan, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations and himself a connoisseur of fine arts and student of Musiri Subramania Iyer. Reproduced below are excerpts from the essay published in Sruti (June/July 1987).

"The popularity of the music concerts of MS is due to the tremendous satisfaction they provide to the common man and the connoisseur alike.....Her aim is to achieve perfection. There is no place for half-hearted attempts in her scheme of things.....The emphasis is, however, not just on music alone but on diction, bhava, pathantara and all those aspects which go to make her a model for vidwans and vidyarthi. It is no wonder then a long-playing record from her is the result of several months' labour and becomes a collector's item.

As one who has listened to MS's concerts for more than four decades, I have

observed two features in her music – the constant and the varying. She does not make a change in her presentation of a raga or a kriti just for the sake of change. The solid prayogas which she has polished over the years are retained and presented without any change every time she sings.....A typical example is her rendering of Sri Kamakoti in Saveri composed by Mysore Sadasiva Rao. Listen to her carefully next time she sings it. She will round off the pallavi with a beautiful kaarvai till the end of the tala cycle and take off immediately on the anupallavi without a pause, revealing her good breath control. You will literally be swept off your feet on such occasions.

"The varying aspect of her music is seen in her selection of kritis and ragas, the sangatis and swaraprastaras. Many songs have come into vogue after they were popularised by her.....Every sangati is rendered twice in the classical manner, offering double satisfaction to the listener. She comes out with new sangatis also which you have not heard earlier. I distinctly remember one concert she gave in the late forties at the Tyagaraja samadhi in Tiruvaiyaru on the annual Aradhana day. A few months earlier, T R Mahalingam's 78 rpm record, containing the ever-popular kriti of Tyagaraja in Navarasa Kannada ('Ninnuvina') had been released. It had been a hit all over the South. In a mood of youthful impishness, MS sang the kriti with all the sangatis that Mali had played adding a few more difficult sangatis of her own. I can still recall the thunderous ovation at the end of the song.

To be continued.....

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பழந்தமிழ் இலக்கியங்களில் புதையலைத் தேடுவோம் (Part-1)

by Dr. Veerapandian

இசை அறிவியல் அடிப்படையில் பழந்தமிழ் இலக்கியங்களை நான் ஆராயத் தொடங்கிய காலத்தில், தமிழில் ஆழ்ந்த புலமையிருந்தால் மட்டுமே பழந்தமிழ் இலக்கியங்களை ஆராய்ச்சி செய்ய முடியும் என்று நான் எண்ணியிருந்தேன். பள்ளியில், கல்லூரியில் தமிழ் படித்தபோதேல்லாம் இலக்கணம் என்பது பெரும்பாலான மாணவர்களுக்கு வேப்பங் காயாகக் கசந்தது. அவர்களில் நானும் ஒருவன். எனவே இசை அறிவியல் நோக்கில் சிலப்பதிகாரத்தை, மணிமேகலையை, தொல்காப்பியத்தை, மற்ற சங்க இலக்கியங் களை நான் புரட்டியபோது, அவற்றில் பல சொற்கள் 'லத்தீனாக'ப் பயமுறுத்தின. பகுத்தறிவு, திறந்த மனது ஆகிய இரண்டு விளக்குகளின் துணையுடன் ஆர்வமாக உழைத்தேன். உழைப்பு வீண் போகவில்லை.

'நியூ செஞ்சரி புக் ஹவுஸ்' சுமார் 20 வருடங்களுக்கு முன் வெளியிட்ட 'சங்க இலக்கியங்கள் தொகுப்பை' எப்போதாவது பயன்படும் என்ற நோக்கில் நான் வாங்கி வைத்திருந்தேன். (நமது இயல்புக்கு தோன்றுவதை புள்ளிகள் போன்று செய்து வைத்தால், பின்னால் நம்மையறியாமலேயே அப்புள்ளிகள் கோலங்களை உருவாக்கும் என்ற மேற்கத்திய எழுத்தாளரின் கருத்தை தொல்காப்பியன் அனுப்பியது நினைவிற்கு வருகிறது.) அத்தொகுப்பில் உரைகள் இன்றி மூலம் (text) மட்டுமே இருந்தது எனது ஆய்வுக்கு பலமாக (உரைகளுக்கு மன அடிமையாகாமல் நேரடியாக பாடல் வரிகளை ஆராய வாய்ப்பாக) அமையும் என்பதும் அப்போது எனக்கு தெரியாது. அதில் உள்ள 'பாட்டும் தொகையும்' என்ற ஒரு புத்தகம் இன்றும் எனக்கு அதிகம் பயன்படுகின்ற ஒன்றாகும். அப்புத்தகத்தில் உள்ள 'சொல்-தொடர் விளக்கம்' மிகவும் அருமையாகவும், எளிமையாகவும் தொகுக்கப்பட்ட ஒன்றாகும். சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் 1982-இல் மறுபதிப்பிட்ட சேர்க்கை(supplement)

உள்ளிட்ட 7 பெரும் தொகுதிகளில் (volumes) இல்லாத சில சொற்களுக்குக் கூட இந்த சிறிய புத்தகத்தில் எனக்கு விளக்கம் கிடைத்தது.

உண்மையில் பழந்தமிழ் இலக்கியங்களில் உள்ள வரிகள்(text) என்பவை பல்புற (cross-disciplinary) ஆய்வு மூலம் அரிய தகவல்களை முத்துக்களாக வெளிப்படுத்தக் காத்திருக்கும் புதையலாகும். உரைகளுக்கு மன அடிமையாகி இவற்றைப் படித்தால் பல அரிய தகவல்களை இழந்து, தவறான புரிதலுடன் வெளிப்பட வேண்டும் என்பதற்கு எனது ஆய்வே சான்றாகும். நம்புவதற்கு கடினமான இந்த உண்மையை எடுத்துக்காட்டுகளுடன் விளக்க விழைகிறேன். இவ்விளக்கமே ஒரு புதையலைத் தேடும் அனுபவத்தை உங்களுக்கு வழங்க வேண்டும் என்று நான் முயல்கிறேன்.

முதலில் சிலப்பதிகாரத்தினுள் நுழைவோம்.

"ஏற்றிய குரல் இனி என்றிரு நரம்பின் ஒப்பக் கேட்கும் உணர்வினன் ஆகி, பண் அமை முதல்வன் கண்ணெறி அறிந்து தண்ணுமை முதல்வன் தன்னொடும் பொருந்தி"
- அரங்கேற்றுக்காதை: வரிகள் 59-62

மேற்சொன்ன பகுதியில் வரும் 'குரல் இனி என்றிரு நரம்பின்' என்ற சொற்கள் இசையில் 'ச' மற்றும் 'ப' என்ற சுரங்களைக் குறிக்கும் என்பது எனக்குத் தெரியும். தமிழிசையில் ச,ரி,க,ம,ப,த,நி என்ற 7 சுர எழுத்துக்களின் சுரப்பெயர்கள் முறையே குரல், துத்தம், கைக்கிளை, உழை, இனி, விளரி, தாரம் என்று அழைக்கப்படும். இதனை முத-ல் மறைந்த இசை அறிஞர் ப. தண்டபாணியின் 'தமிழன் கண்ட இசை' என்ற சிறு நூல் படித்திருந்தேன். பின்னர் வீ. ப. கா. சுந்தரம் உள்ளிட்ட பல இசை அறிஞர்களின் நூல்களில் இதனை உறுதிப்படுத்திக் கொண்டேன்.

'ச' மற்றும் 'ப' என்ற இரண்டு சுரங்களும்

இசையில் இனிமை தரும் உறவு (consonance) கொண்டவை என்பதையும், காதால் கேட்டே இதை உணரமுடியும் என்பதையும் அலெக்ஸாண்டர் வுட் (Alexander Wood) எழுதிய 'இசையின் இயற்பியல்' (Physics of Music) என்ற ஆங்கிலப் புத்தகத்தில் நான் ஏற்கனவே படித்திருந்தேன். எனவே 'ஒப்பக் கேட்கும் உணர்வினன் ஆகி' என்ற சொற்கள் மேற்சொன்னதையேக் குறிக்கும் என்பது எனக்குத் தெளிவானது. இந்தத் தெளிவுடன் உ.வெ.சா வெளியிட்ட சிலப்பதிகார நூலில் மேற்சொன்ன பகுதிக்கான உரையைப் படிப்போம். அதில் குறை இருப்பது உங்களுக்கே புலனாகும்.

"பதினாற் கோவையினிடத்துக் குரல் நரம்பு இரட்டிக்க வரும் அரும்பாலையும், இனி நரம்பு இரட்டிக்க வரும் மேற்செம்பாலையும், இவை போல அல்லாத பாலகளையும் இசை நூல் வழக்காலே இணை நரம்பு தொடுத்து பாடும் அறிவினையு முடையனாயென்க."

மேலே குறிப்பிட்ட சிலப்பதிகார வரிகளுக்கு இந்த உரை சரியல்ல என்பது எனக்குத் தெளிவானது. இதைச் சரியென்று ஏற்றுக்கொண்டுள்ள தமிழறிஞர்களிடம் இது சரியல்ல என்று சாமான்யனான நான் சொல்ல முடியுமா? அறிவியல் துறையைச் சார்ந்த என் போன்றோர் இம்முயற்சியில் ஈடுபடுவது அத்துமீறிய பிரவேசம் (Tresspass) என்று தமிழறிஞர்கள் கருதுவதை நான் அனுபவித்துள்ளேன். எனவே ஏன் இந்த உரை சரியல்ல? எது சரியான உரை? என்ற கேள்விகளுக்கு அவர்களில் திறந்த மனதுடையவர்கள் ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளும்படியான விடைகளைத் தேடத் தொடங்கினேன். மேலே சொன்ன சிலப்பதிகார மூல வரிகளில் 'ஏற்றிய குரல் இனி' என்ற சொற்கள் உள்ளன. 'ஏற்றிய' என்றால் என்ன பொருள்? இசை தொடர்பாக 'ஏற்றிய' என்றால் என்ன பொருள் என்பதை சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் வெளியிட்ட Tamil Lexicon-உம் விளக்கவில்லை, Pre Pallavan Tamil Index -உம் விளக்கவில்லை. (இது போல இசை தொடர்பான பல சொற்களுக்கு இத்தகைய நூல்களில் விளக்கம்

இல்லை. சில சொற்களுக்குத் தவறான விளக்கங்களும் உள்ளன.) இந்த இடத்தில் சோர்ந்து விடாமல், தேடல் உடனே பலனளிக்க வேண்டும் என்ற எதிர்பார்ப்பு இல்லாமல், (புதையல் தேடலில் வெற்றி பெறும் இரகசியம் இது) இசை தொடர்பான நூல்களையும், பழந்தமிழ் இலக்கியங்களையும் புரிந்தும் புரியாமலும் படிக்கத் தொடங்கினேன். (கிடார், ஹார்மோனியம் வாசிக்கக் கற்றுக்கொண்ட பின் தான் சுர இசை பற்றிய நூல்களும், மிருதங்கம் கற்றுக்கொண்ட பின் தான் தாள இசை பற்றிய நூல்களும் எனக்கு விளங்கத் தொடங்கின.)

தெய்வசிகாமணிக் கவுண்டர் என்ற 'புகழ் பெறாத உ.வெ.சா.' 1970-களில் தேடிக் கண்டுபிடித்தச் சுவடியிலிருந்து 'பஞ்ச மரபு' என்னும், சிலப்பதிகார உரையாசிரியர்கள் தமது உரையில் மேற்கோள் காட்டிய, இசை நூல் வெளியானது. அந்நூலில் 'ஏற்றிய' என்பதன் இசை தொடர்பான பொருள் எனக்குக் கிடைத்தது. அவருக்குக் கிடைத்த 'இசை நுணுக்கம்' என்ற அரிய இசை நூல் சுவடி பணவசதியின்றி அச்சிட தாமதமானதால் அழிந்து போனது. இத்தகைய புதையல் வேட்டையில் இது போன்ற சீரணிக்க முடியாத சோகங்களைச் சந்திப்பது தவிர்க்க இயலாது.

'ஏற்றிய குரல் இனி' என்றால் 'சரியாக சுருதி சேர்க்கப்பட்ட (properly tuned) ச மற்றும் ப ஆகிய சுரங்கள்' என்று பொருள். சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் வெளியிட்ட Tamil Lexicon-உம் Pre Pallavan Tamil Index-உம் விளக்காத ஒரு சொல்லின் பொருளை நாம் கண்டுபிடித்து விட்டோம். ஆர்வம் குறையாமல் நீண்ட காலம் தேடியபின் கிடைக்கும் 'புதையல்' தரும் இத்தகைய இன்பம் அனுபவித்தால் மட்டுமே விளங்கும்.

'ஏற்றிய குரல் இனி' என்பது 'சரியாக சுருதி சேர்க்கப்பட்ட (properly tuned) ச மற்றும் ப ஆகிய சுரங்கள்' என்று கண்டு பிடித்தாகிவிட்டது. இந்த இரண்டையும் ஒரே நேரத்தில் வயலின் போன்ற இசைக்கருவிகளில் மீட்டி காதால் 'ஒப்பக் கேட்டு' உணரமுடியும் என்பதை அலெக்ஸாண்டர் வுட் எழுதிய

புத்தகத்தில் படித்தாகிவிட்டது. எனக்குத் தெரிந்த இசைக் கலைஞர்களிடம் கேட்டு இது சரி என உறுதி செய்துகொண்டேன். பின் முறையாக இசை பயின்ற பின் நானே இத்திறமையை வளர்த்துக் கொண்டேன். இந்தப் புரிதலுடன் மீண்டும் மேலே குறிப்பிட்ட சிலப்பதிகார உரையை மீண்டும் படியுங்கள். உங்களுக்கே அது நெருடலாகத் தெரியும்.

மேலே குறிப்பிட்ட சிலப்பதிகார மூல வரிகளில் வரும் 'தண்ணுமை' என்பது மிருதங்கம் போன்ற தாள இசைக்கருவியைக் குறிக்கும் என தமிழ் இசை பற்றிய நூல்களிலிருந்து தெரிந்து கொண்டேன். மேலும் சிறிது காலம் கழிகிறது. ஏன் இந்த உரை சரியல்ல? எது சரியான உரை? என்ற கேள்விகளுக்கு முழு விடை இன்னும் கிடைக்கவில்லை.

புரிந்தும் புரியாமலும் சீவக சிந்தாமணியைப் படித்தேன். அதில் 675 வரிக்கான உரையில் 'இடக்கண் இளியாய் வலக்கண் குரலாய் நடப்பது தோலியற் கருவியாகும்' என்ற சூத்திரத்தை நச்சினார்க்கினியர் மேற்கோள் காட்டியிருந்தார்.

அதாவது தாள இசைக்கருவியின் இடது பக்கம் 'ப' என்ற இசைச்சுரமும், வலது பக்கம் 'ச' என்ற இசைச்சுரமும் ஒலிக்க வேண்டும். இதுவே சீவக சிந்தாமணி நச்சினார்க்கினியர் உரைக் குறிப்பிட்ட சூத்திரத்தின் பொருளாகும். இதைப் படித்தவுடன் சர்.சி.வி.ராமன் இசை தொடர்பான ஆய்வுக் கட்டுரைகளில் இதே தகவலை வெளிப்படுத்தியிருந்தது எனக்கு ஞாபகத்திற்கு வந்தது.

இப்போது மீண்டும் சிலப்பதிகார வரிகளைப் படித்து பொருள் காண முற்படுவோம். "ஏற்றிய குரல் இனி என்றிரு நரம்பின்" என்பது யாழில் சரியாக சுருதி சேர்க்கப்பட்ட ச மற்றும் ப இசை நரம்புகளைக் குறிக்கிறது. இந்த இரண்டு நரம்புகளின் இசைச்சுர ஒலிகளையும் காதால் "ஒப்பக் கேட்கும் உணர்வினன்" ஆக தண்ணுமை என்னும் தாள இசைக் கருவியை வாசிப்பவன் இருக்கிறான். இவருக்கு பாடலுக்குப் பொருத்தமான ('பண் அமை முழவின்') தாள இசையை தாள

இசைக்கருவியில் எங்கு, எப்படி எழுப்புவது ("கண்ணெறி அறிந்து") என்பது தெரியும். இவர் யாழில் எழுப்பப்படும் ச மற்றும் ப இசைச்சுர ஒலிகளை, ஒப்பக் கேட்டு உணர்ந்து, தனது தண்ணுமையில் இடது பக்கம் 'ப' இசைச்சுர ஒலியையும், வலது பக்கம் 'ச' இசைச்சுர ஒலியையும் எழுப்பி யாழிசைக்கு தமது தாள இசையைப் ('தண்ணுமை முதல்வன் தன்னொடும் பொருந்தி') பொருந்தச் செய்கிறார்.

இப்போது முன்பு குறிப்பிட்ட சிலப்பதிகார உரையை மீண்டும் படியுங்கள். ஏன் அந்த உரை சரியல்ல? எது சரியான உரை? என்ற கேள்விகளுக்கு முழு விடை நமக்கு கிடைத்து விட்டது. இதனால் அந்த உரையை நாம் புறக்கணித்து விட முடியாது. நமது புதையல் வேட்டையில் இந்த புரிதல் அவசியமாகும்.

அந்த உரை ஓர் இசைத்தகவலை வெளிப்படுத்தியுள்ளது என்பதும், அந்த தகவல் மேற்சொன்ன சிலப்பதிகார மூல வரிகளுக்குப் பொருந்தவில்லை என்பதும் இந்தப் புரிதலில் அடங்கும். அது மட்டுமல்ல, சிலப்பதிகார வரிகளுக்கு அந்த உரை பொருந்தவில்லை என்றாலும், சரியான விளக்கத்தைப் பெற சீவக சிந்தாமணி உரையில் நச்சினார்க்கினியர் பயன்படுத்திய சூத்திரம் துணை புரிந்துள்ளது என்பதையும் நாம் கவனிக்க வேண்டும். எனவே உரை எப்போதும் தவறு என்றோ, சரி என்றோ முன்கூட்டியே முடிவு செய்துவிடக் கூடாது. மாறாக, உரை எந்த இடத்தில் சரியாக இருக்கிறது?, எங்கு சரியாக இல்லை?, ஒரு இடத்தில் சரியாக இல்லாத உரையின் தகவல் வேறொரு இடத்தில் சரியான விளக்கம் பெற துணை புரிகிறதா? போன்ற கேள்விகளை பகுத்தறிவுடனும், திறந்த மனதுடனும் அணுகுவது இந்த புதையல் வேட்டையில் வெற்றி பெறுவதற்கான இரகசியங்களாகும். இதே அணுகுமுறையை Tamil Lexicon, Pre Pallavan Tamil Index உள்ளிட்ட எல்லா விளக்க அகராதிகளிலும் பின்பற்ற வேண்டும்.

இந்தப் புதையல் வேட்டையில் நாம் அடுத்தக் கட்டத்திற்கு நுழையப் போகிறோம்.

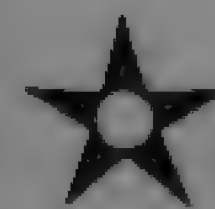
To be continued.....

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INTERVIEW

TRICHUR V. RAMACHANDRAN

by K. Subadra Murthy

(This article is dedicated to the memory of Shri S.Seshadri who was keen that the writer should interview the musician about GNB, the legendary maestro who was also the guru of the artist. The informal chat with Shri Trichur Ramachandran took place at the Sabha premises during the musician's visit for a concert a couple of years ago. The delay in delivering and publishing the article due to unforeseen and unavoidable reasons is regretted - KSM)

Trichur V Ramachandran (TVR) who has recently completed fifty golden years of service to classical music is nothing if not humble. In general when an artist is interviewed, s/he dwells more about her/his own accomplishments and views. TVR, when he found that the focus of the interview was about his guru, spoke more about GNB, the music scenario of yesteryears, and less about himself. His intense *guru bhakti* was much in evidence as he spoke about his beloved teacher.

You are the acknowledged torchbearer of the GNB bani. What motivated you to seek him as your guru?

I was interested in music even as a child and as an 8 year old when I first heard GNB's concert at our doctor's family wedding in my hometown, I was enchanted and wanted to learn music from him. He sang 'Sarasijanaba sodari' that day – the song and the beauty of the *sangatis* are still lingering fresh in my mind.

Some years later, there was a music competition in Ernakulam in which Jesudas (he was not singing in films yet) and I participated. I did not get any prize but the judges, one of whom was M L Vasanthakumari, said that I sang well and suggested I learn from GNB as my style of singing was like his. This further added to my desire but somehow did not materialize for quite a while.



When did you finally get that cherished opportunity?

It was two years later. My mother took me to GNB's house in Madras and requested him to see if I was fit enough to be accepted as his disciple. You see, those days no one said to the guru - 'you must teach my son/daughter'. The guru was revered and they abided by his decision regarding their ward. GNB asked me to sing and then he agreed to teach me and asked me to come from the next day. I had just got admission in a medical college back home but gave it up when GNB accepted me as his disciple.

Why did you risk a medical career for the uncertain life of a classical musician?

I realized that I would not be able to get such a guru and such an opportunity again and so made my choice. My guru used to say "you have to take risks in life" and he himself did not mind taking risks.

Most of the great vidwans used to visit GNB's father Narayanaswamy Iyer and GNB was inspired and learnt music by listening to them. Once, the great violinist Karur Chinnaswamy Iyer came to their house. At that time GNB, a B.A.(Hons) graduate was in a dilemma if he should choose music or law. The maestro asked him to sing and told his father that he should be allowed to take up music seriously, without any second thought. A great star of Carnatic music was thus born!

What was GNB's criterion for selecting his disciples?

In his selection of *shishyas*, my *vaadyar* looked for a certain standard. If the aspirant did not meet his requirements, he would frankly tell him so. We should also have the interest and capacity to understand what is taught otherwise we would not only waste the time of such great *vidwans* like him but also disappoint them. He was very plainspoken and while he agreed to teach me all that he knew, he also said that it was a difficult profession and I would have to devote a lot of my time and work very hard. I said I was prepared to do that as he was there to guide me. That happens only when you meet his standards.

Could you tell us something about GNB the teacher?

There was such clarity in his teaching. Whatever he taught one could immediately understand and follow. I had learnt music earlier back home and therefore could comfortably grasp what was taught although at first there was some difficulty as the style was different. Later it became easier as I got used to that style and listened to several concerts. GNB himself had no

guru as such but learnt mostly by listening to concerts. He said that he was inspired by Ariyakudi and considered him as his *maanaseeka* guru.

GNB encouraged his disciples to attend the concerts of other musicians, as he believed one could learn much by listening. He continued to learn new songs even at the height of his popularity. Going to concerts with him was an experience by itself. I used to go with him often, come home and practice what I had heard. He taught many things about music, the nuances, inspiring stories and specialty of the music of other maestros.

He used to talk about the greatness of other musicians. Tiger Varadachary was a musician's musician, who did not perform prolifically in concerts but was a great maestro. I remember an incident when on the morning of a concert GNB sang Todi to us and said Tiger used to sing like that and literally shed tears in appreciation of Tiger's musical acumen. He told us that we should also try to sing like the maestro and in the evening's concert he once again sang like Tiger.

Unless one has heard Tiger Varadachary or any other great maestro sing, how can one know how he sang? Or understand what was special about their music? The Todi that GNB sang that evening was the best Todi he ever sang! Fantastic is perhaps the only word that can describe it!

He taught us voice culture, the importance of producing pure notes, how to sing *gamakas*, cautioning us against their overuse and also how much *gamaka* should be used for a particular *raga*, etc.

He often said "You should know the how and why of things", understand why one sang in a particular way. He never wanted us to be his carbon copies but to understand, internalize and create our own music.

TV Ramanujam once said of GNB that he was both a *lakshya* as well as a *lakshana vidwan*, it was rare to find both in an artist. Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer for instance was a *lakshya vidwan* and his music was very pleasing. There was *lakshana* also but he did not know how to express/explain it. GNB was literate, articulate, and intelligent and could explain well.

How long did you train under GNB?

I was fortunate to be with him for five years from 1960. After he passed away in 1965, I came under MLV's guidance, with a two-year Government of India Cultural scholarship.

It was almost like *gurukula vaasam* as I stayed close to his house and spent most of my time with him. I used to feel that I was rather late and ought to have come to him much earlier. I was very surprised when he said that I had come at the right time because it was only then that he knew something about music. With all his years of successful musical career and experience, he said that! Such was his humility! He used to feel bad whenever he was indisposed for a few days and could not teach much. He had great regard for teachers who visited him.

What was special about GNB's style of singing?

GNB had taken the best qualities from the

music of several maestros of the time like Rajaratnam Pillai, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayengar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, etc and created his own *bani* and carved a niche for himself at a time when the concert scenario was dominated by renowned masters. That was the golden period for Carnatic music! I'd like to share more about this later!

GNB's voice was a god-given gift and he strove for perfection. He had fantastic *manodharma* and created a great *bani*. His concerts were marked by aesthetic beauty, classicism and based on tradition. M. Balamuralikrishna once said that he was the 'Dhruva Nakshatra' of Carnatic music.

It is said that Ariyakudi once commented "*Ennamaa paadaraan paathiyaa!*" (How wonderfully he sings!). And when he was asked how GNB's singing was different from other musicians, he said "*Namma angavastharathai appadiye pottukkarom. Avan angavastharathai paathiyaa - avan isthiri panni pottukkaraan. Anda maadiridaan avan sangeethamum*". (We wear our *angavasthram* casually but he irons it neatly and then wears it. His music is also like that.)

His forte was *raga alapana* and he was renowned for the way he sang popular as well as rare *ragas*. Once the Hindustani maestro Bade Ghulam Ali Khan was so enchanted when he heard GNB sing *raag Andolika* that he asked him for the *arohana* and *avarohana* and in his next concert in Delhi in 1954 he sang *Andolika*. When his charmed fans praised him for this new *raag*, he told them that there was a musician in Madras called GNB who sang much better than he.

You mentioned about the music of yesteryears - the golden period of Carnatic music, which you wanted to share with our readers. The young students of the music school in particular, will benefit from knowing more. Could you please talk about it now?

The last century was the golden era of Carnatic music. Post music trinity, this period - from the late 19th century onwards, saw the emergence of great composers as well as fine exponents like Mysore Vasudevachar, Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Madurai Mani Iyer, et al. Then came artists like TK Rangachari, Sattur Subramania Iyer, MD Ramanathan, Brinda-Mukta, DK Pattammal, MS Subbulakshmi, ML Vasanthakumari, DK Jayaraman, etc.

Amongst instrumentalists, Rajaratnam Pillai (nagaswaram), Flute Mahalingam, AKC Natarajan (clarinet); violin Subramania Pillai, Chowdiah, Lalgudi Jayaraman, MS Gopalakrishnan, TN Krishnan (violinists); Palghat Mani Iyer, TK Murthy, Murugabhoopathy, (mridangam) etc, made their mark. Fortunate indeed are those who have heard these great masters perform for there was a richness and fullness in their concerts. For these maestros, it was music for music's sake and they dedicated their lives in pursuit of it.

Each one had their own specialty, like Viswanatha Iyer and his *manodharma*, which is a very important aspect of our

music; Ariyakudi and Musiri Subramania Iyer were *madhyama kala* and *chowka kala* experts respectively; Musiri was also renowned for his *neravals* while the Alathur Brothers were famed for their Pallavi singing, Madurai Mani Iyer for the divinity of his music and Ramnad Krishnan for his Sahana.

Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan was a very disciplined musician and refused to sing when concerts were ticketed. He took great care to preserve his voice, which was sweet as honey, followed a strict diet and hardly spoke. His brother did all the talking on his behalf. It is said that the Maharaja of Mysore had recorded his voice but it was lost in a fire. Unfortunately there is no other recording available and the young generation has lost the opportunity to listen to such a great master. It is unfortunate that not much is done by us to preserve and archive the performances of great masters in our country unlike the west.

The maestros of yesteryears were particular about *sadhana*, and spent much time practising. Fame and popularity did not reduce their devotion and commitment to music. Alathur brothers used to practise a Pallavi for two months before singing in a concert. Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer, the great *vainika*, was renowned for his Arabhi. He was inseparable from his veena even while sleeping. He was averse to playing in radio concerts, but made an exception when GNB was the producer and requested him to play in a live relay concert. He too was a musician who gave much importance to constant practise. My guru GNB also used to practice a composition 50-60 times before he would sing it in a concert.

Ariyakudi was the architect for the *kutcheri padhati* as we know it. The concerts those days were not limited by time and the musicians used to take up just 3-4 *keerthanams* and sing them in a leisurely manner as there was enough time to explore all the nuances and shades of the *raga*. With the advent of *sabhas* and public participation, the need to modify to suit their tastes brought about changes.

Our music can boast of so many composers and songs in so many languages that one lifetime is not enough to do justice to them. Besides singing the *kritis* of the Carnatic trinity, which have pride of place in our concerts, one has to give time for *manodharma sangitam*, *tukkadas*, etc, all within 3 hours.

The maestros of the past used to attend each other's concerts. When DK Pattammal sang, MS would come. I have seen many stalwarts like Semmangudi, MS, DKP, MLV, etc attend GNB's concerts. When a *vidwan* was present, the musicians were inspired to sing even better. Unfortunately, this sort of culture is lacking now, the present-day audiences too are mostly in their fifties. Youngsters and music students should attend concerts regularly as that would help them learn better. Parents too should take the responsibility of creating a proper musical atmosphere at home and someone should guide the young music students appropriately.

Could you tell us more about GNB as a person and as a musician?

He was the first graduate to take to music as a career. Now of course, all sorts of professionals are into music, but GNB was the trendsetter. He was charismatic, and

had a fine aesthetic sense and everything he did was infused with it - whether it was his way of dressing, singing a *raga*, selection of a *kriti*, performing *Srividya puja*, etc. He was a perfectionist and that was reflected even in simple things like folding a paper or in the neatness of his home. GNB's mother used to bless him when her handsome son came down dressed for the concert, only then would he leave. When he spoke it was interesting and to the point. He was a very simple man, hospitable and appreciative of all. He never spoke ill of anyone, did not indulge in idle gossip and was saddened by the jealousies, gossip and ill behaviour of others.

He gave importance to *sampradaya 'pidigal'* - gave the traditional a new shade by presenting them differently. GNB had popularized new compositions, new *ragas*, *vivadi ragas* but used them only to the extent it would be pleasing and gave importance to singing traditional and time-honoured *ragas*. He used to say, "*Naan neraya paadiyachu, pudu ragangalum paadiyaachu. Aanaa praacheena ragangal paadinaadaan azhagu.*" (I've sung a great deal, including new *ragas*. But it's more fulfilling to sing established *ragas*.) *Ragas* like Kalyani, Todi, Kambhoji, Sankarabharanam, etc are beautiful and have unlimited scope. You can make a name singing rare/new *ragas* as not many know them, but to make a mark singing traditional *ragas* is difficult." There are several wrong notions about what is tradition. An elderly person once gave an apt definition saying that tradition is "good values carried over from generation to generation".

He had composed many songs, created new *ragas* like Amritabehag, Shivashakti, etc which he had taught us but he never sang them in his concerts. His disciples sang them. His compositions are as great as those of Patnam Subramania Iyer, Muthiah Bhagavathar, et al. Interestingly, he has also notated German music during wartime. If we, his disciples are able to sing at least to this extent, it is because we were constantly with him absorbing everything he taught us.

I have listened to many of his concerts, the Kalyani or Todi of one concert would not be the same in the next day's concert. He had incredible imagination and range and has often said that he cannot reproduce what he sang the next time, for the ideas would be different. Even other *vidwans* were amazed at his virtuosity. Semmangudi once said that GNB swept through the Carnatic scenario like a tornado and stunned everyone with his enchanting music.

Such was his popularity that his fans made sure that even weddings were fixed only when his calendar was free. One of the conditions insisted upon while planning the wedding was that GNB's concert should be arranged. There was a period when for about ten to fifteen years the concert scene was ruled by MS and GNB.

Weddings, particularly of elite families, were usually a ten-day affair those days and concerts of great stalwarts like Ariyakudi, Rajaratnam Pillai, Flute Mali, Palghat Mani, etc were arranged. The concerts were held at about 9.30 p.m. after dinner each day and the guests sat in pin-drop silence listening to the music unlike now when they

chatter loudly even in *sabha* concerts. Such was the respect they had for music!

What was your experience as a disciple of GNB?

Chembai and GNB lived in the same compound and spoke only about music. All these great artistes liked us very much. He had some very good disciples like MLV, Kalyanaraman, TR Balasubramanian, Radha-Jayalakshmi, et al.

The time I spent with my guru was like *gurukulavasam* – such training helps to equip oneself well. When GNB asked me to take ten days off and go home to visit my family, I would be back in two days. There was so much to learn from him that I was loath to be away from him for long as he used to give so many tips. There was so much to learn and we had to work hard. Just as a student of medicine or law needs to undergo training and gain experience from seniors in their field, so too it is with music. Half baked knowledge is bad in any field. There are many youngsters who like his style and follow it. Artistry, dedication and hard work are important in any field. Most people realize it only when it is too late.

GNB became ill towards the end. Whenever we told him to take care of his health, he would say others would emerge and sing like he did. No self-aggrandizement for GNB!

Perhaps you would like to tell our young readers the importance of learning from a guru?

I would advise all serious students to seek out a good guru with humility and work hard learning all aspects of music from him/her.

There is no need to be hasty. Equip yourself properly and then ascend a stage. Your approach to music should be a '*tapas*'. Most students will probably not even read this, they will probably say we already know all this.

Learn from maestros to get the fullness of music. Nuances can be learnt only from a guru. A good guru is one who teaches how the *sahitya* and the *raga* should be sung; teaching several compositions in the same *raga* and the different *prayogas* in the different compositions of the same *raga*. It is only after imbibing all this and singing constantly can one grasp the fullness of the *raga* and enhance the quality of music. Sadly, all this is lacking now and so the quality has also gone down.

A serious student should go to a good guru - they are ready to teach. There's so much of talent but someone should bring them to light. Select at least ten youngsters with potential every year and send them to maestros who would nurture their talent. Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata is doing great work like this. The government and institutions should come forward, select and nurture the talented. They are willing to spend millions for sports, why can't they do the same for our arts?

About Trichur V. Ramachandran

The son of the Chief Justice of Kerala, Trichur V. Ramachandran gave up the safety of a career in medicine to take up music seriously under the maestro G. N. Balasubramaniam. Initially trained by Varkala Subramania Bhagavathar and Tiruppunithura Krishna Iyer, he had his debut in 1954, when he was barely 14 years old and his first radio program in 1959.

The blue-eyed boy of the renowned maestro, Trichur Ramachandran has spent more than five decades as the torchbearer of the GNB bani. When Shanmukhananda was inaugurated in 1952/53 GNB sang in the two-day concert accompanied by MS Gopalakrishnan on the violin and Murugabhoopathy on the mridangam. TVR also sang with his guru on that occasion.

TVR recalls his solo concert in the Shanmukhananda Sabha in 1972. It was memorable as he sang for the first time without a mike, accompanied by VV Subramaniam (violin) and Palghat Mani (mridangam). Few people also know that he is also trained in Hindustani music.

The 68 year-old musician is married to Charumati, the well known disciple of MLV, he cherishes the memorable occasion when the great doyennes of Carnatic music, MS, DKP and MLV, sang the '*oonjal*' songs during their wedding rituals. He has also published a book of his guru GNB's compositions in tribute to his memory.

The couple had presented Nauka Charitram with music, dance and slides with French captions in response to a request from France. The opera lasting an hour and a half was well-appreciated. They have also done others like Krishna Leela, Bhakta Meera, Heritage of India, etc, besides a production on the 5000 years of history from the Vedic era for which they used settings from Manohar's drama troupe, which was a great hit. The last production was a show on Ravi Varma, the great painter. He has also recorded Narayaneeyam in a ten cassette series set to hundred different ragas.

Blessed with a commanding stage presence, a rich voice and the evergreen charm of the GNB style, TVR has received several honours including the Sangeeta Choodamani and the Padma Bhushan.

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PANDIT BHIMSEN JOSHI – THE ORTHODOX REVOLUTIONARY

by Irfan Zuberi who is currently pursuing his Ph.D., from the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance, Jania Millia Islamia in New Delhi and has been learning dhrupad from Ustad Rahim Fahiruddin Khan Dagar for over three years. He can be reached at izuberi@gmail.com



Pandit Bhimsen Joshi being conferred the Sri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2004 by President V. Shankar

On 4 November 2008, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi was conferred the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian honour of the country thus joining ranks with three other stellar personalities from the field of classical music – Vidushi M. S. Subbulakshmi (1998), Pandit Ravi Shankar (1999) and Ustad Bismillah Khan (2001). This award completes a glittering list of his laurels, the prominent among which are Padma Shri (1972), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1976), Padma Bhushan (1985) and Padma Vibhushan (1999).

Born on 4 February 1922 in Gadag, Karnataka, Bhimsen Gururaj Joshi is the eldest of 16 siblings. His father, Gururajacharya Joshi was a Sanskrit scholar and the Headmaster of the Municipal High School in Gadag. His uncle Govindacharya Joshi was a Kannada writer

and dramatist. Thus, scholarly blood flowed in Bhimsen's veins but it was probably the musical inheritance from his grandfather Bhimacharya Joshi which was responsible for his initial interest in music. Even as a child, he is said to have gazed at his mother Godavaribai with a smile when she used to sing Kannada *bhajans* to lull him to sleep.

After initial music lessons from Chinnappa Kurtakoti and Pandit Shyamacharya (who taught him Ragas Bhairav and Bhimpalasi), perhaps the first major turning point in Bhimsen's life came when he heard the gramophone record of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan. The *khayal* in Raga Basant ("Phagwa brij dekhan ko chalo ri...") and *thumri* in Raga Jhinjhoti ("Piya bin nahin aawat chain...") mesmerized him and he made up his mind to learn the *gayaki* of the Ustad. In 1933, at the age of 11, Bhimsen left home

and travelled across the country stopping at Pune, Gwalior, Calcutta, Delhi and Jalandhar in search of a guru. Regaling railway officials and co-passengers with songs during his ticketless journeys, Bhimsen received *taaleem* in Ragas Marwa and Pooriya from *sarod* maestro Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan in Gwalior and some basic training in *dhrupad-dhamar* from Bhakt Mangat Ram in Jalandhar. During the ongoing Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan in Jalandhar, young Bhimsen accompanied top vocalists of the time on the *tanpura*. Pandit Vinayakrao Patwardhan, one of the stalwarts of the Gwalior *gharana*, suggested that he should return home and learn from Pandit Rambhau Kundgolkar (Sawai Gandharva), a direct disciple of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan.

The tutelage under Sawai Gandharva marked the second major turning point in Bhimsen's life. The initial 18 months of *gurukulavasa* turned out to be a period of harsh tests and household chores during which little musical *taaleem* took place. After that, the fee was waived aside and the guru started teaching the *shishya* intensively. Rigorous *riyaz* of Todi in the mornings, Multani in the afternoons and Pooriya in the nights marked the following four years after which Sawai Gandharva took Bhimsen along for his concert tours to render vocal support. Subsequently, his love for *Poorab-ang thumri* took him to Lucknow where he closely heard Begum Akhtar, Siddheswari Devi, Rasoolan Bai and others and imbibed their influences into his flowering *gayaki*. He also received some *taaleem* from Ustad Mushtaq Hussain Khan of the Rampur-Sehaswan *gharana* during this sojourn.

His first solo recital came in 1941 in Hubli and was organized by his *gurubehen* Vidushi Gangubai Hangal and her husband. The first All India Radio broadcast came to him in February 1943 from the Bombay station. Soon after, he made his first HMV recording in 1944. However, the recital which pushed him into the limelight was the one in which he sang Raga Miyan ki Malhar and a Marathi *abhang* in Pune in January 1946 on the occasion of the sixtieth birth celebrations of his guru Sawai Gandharva.

Having imbibed multiple influences, Bhimsen Joshi has built a *gayaki* of his own on the foundations of the Kirana *gharana*. It would appear that he has been able to evolve an approach which strikes a balance between traditional values and mass culture preferences. The melodic framework of his *gayaki* holds out the promise of an aesthetically integrated form – broad in conception and consisting of a judicious amalgam of the primary ornamentation techniques of *aalaap*, *bol aalaap*, *taan*, *bol taan* and *gamak*. His trademark cascading *taans* have dazzled and mesmerized many listeners down the years and showcase the amazing volume, range and breath control he has been able to develop.

Discerning connoisseurs have been able to gauge the impress of Surshri Kesarbai Kerkar and Ustad Amir Khan in his *vilambit* development where the typical Kirana fashion note-by-note unfolding is marked by the kind of pace that generates and accents a reposeful mood. In his *drut* singing, he reveals a marvellous admixture of *gayakis* as diverse as Gwalior, Jaipur-Atrauli, Indore and Patiala. Straight *taan* patterns akin to Patiala *gharana* are

blended with intricate odd-shaped ones from Jaipur-Atrauli *gharana*. Sarangi-like *taans* belonging to Kirana *gharana* are also craftily mixed with the *laya* oriented *taankaari* belonging to Gwalior *gharana*. Truly, only a maestro of Bhimsen's genius can achieve such a complex fusion with ease!

His repertoire consists primarily of the *prachalit* ragas such as Miyan ki Todi, Bhairavi, Ramkali, Bhimpalasi, Yaman, Shuddha Kalyan, Multani, Pooriya, Shankara and Darbari Kanhra. Self-created ragas such as Kalashree, Lalit-Bhatiyar and Marwa-Shree boast of his compositional ability. Bhajans, Kannada *vachanas*, Marathi *abhangs* and *thumris* round off a repertoire which has been able to hold forth in front of diverse audiences all over the world.

Apart from being a classical vocalist, Bhimsen Joshi is a man of many parts – a yoga enthusiast, a singing stage-actor, a swimmer, a football enthusiast and a connoisseur of art. He is also a self-trained automobile engineer and his fascination for cars is well known. Having been married twice (Sunanda Hungund in 1944 and Vatsala Mudholkar in 1951), he faced considerable family problems but has been able to negotiate them amicably. A considerable phase of his performance career was also plagued with problems related to alcoholism but he was able to fight and kick the habit for good in 1979.

As a guru, Bhimsen has not been able to contribute much to the future. Amid busy concert tours and multifarious professional engagements, he has not been able to find enough time to groom many worthy

disciples. Nonetheless, prominent among his students are Madhav Gudi, Shrikant Deshpande, Upendra Bhat and son, Srinivas Joshi. There are many vocalists who have been influenced deeply by the style of Bhimsen Joshi without having learnt from him directly. Pandit Rajan-Sajan Misra, Pandit Ganapati Bhat, Pandit Sangameshwar Gurav and Jayateerth Mevundi are examples in point.

Perhaps the biggest contribution of Bhimsen Joshi to the world of music has been initiating and keeping alive the Sawai Gandharva Sangeet Sammelan in Pune since 1953. Over the last 55 years, the festival has become one of the major annual events in the cultural calendar featuring the best musicians from across the country. Defying many odds related to his ill health, Bhimsen gave his last major recital during the Sammelan in December 2007 in which he regaled listeners with Raga Multani, a Marathi *abhang* and *thumri* in Raga Bhairavi.

True to his gracious self, he received the Bharat Ratna "on behalf of all vocalists." One can only hope that the quintessential *khayaliya* of the modern era, the orthodox revolutionary Bhimsen Joshi stays in our midst for many years to come continuing to inspire the new generation of vocalists with his colossal voice and presence.

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RAGA MOHANAM - ITS SVARA ASPECTS AND STARTING POINT

by S. Lalitha

The scale and the notes of Mohanam are found in our ancient music and also in the music of different parts of the world. Yet the name Mohanam is attributed to the raga in the musical texts since 17th century only. The raga has been assigned to different melas - 65th and 28th by texts. Mohanam's scale is equated to mullai pann in Tamil tradition by Dr. S. Ramanathan.

Mohanam's melodic form is available to us just prior to Trinity's period.

The raga and its Svaras' behaviour

Mohanam is presently classified under 28th melam, Harikambhoji.

Its scale is : SRGPŚ - ŚPGRS.

Svaras taken are Shadjam, Chatusruti Risabham, Antara Gandharam, Pancamam and Chatusruti Dhaivatham.

Mohanam is a very popular raga in our music and easily understandable by all. It is one of the major ragas. Most composers have handled this raga.

A plain rendering of its scale, though reveals the raga, it is a heavy auduva raga calling for proficient handling.

S and P are plain notes, as everyone is aware.

R and D are oscillating (kampita) notes. R and D may oscillate mildly or with a forcible beat (nokku) indicating G and S respectively. The oscillation is short and crisp; it does not prolong.

G is a vital note of the raga. G of Mohanam is mostly plain and at times with oscillation. When occurring as a commencing note, this G is plain. While occurring intermittently it may have a mild oscillation

and in a phrase like gpgrS this G merges with P (P is heard lesser than its sthana here). G may sometimes be silent (in the form of Kandippu gamaka) but present. (eg) - P(g)RS. Interestingly, in the phrase - G(r)S, where R is silent with a kandippu gamaka, the same G necessarily takes the anusvara of R and sung as (r)G(r)S.

Various datu prayogas and gamakas like spuritam, jaru, ravai (eg: śrġŚ—sounding as śrġśŚ) adorn the raga. It provides for all tempos and is a tristhayi raga.

S, G, P, D, Ś - are all resting notes for the raga. R may also serve as a resting note in raga alapana for a few phrases but may not go on for long. So, all svaras of the raga lend themselves as resting notes.

Mohanam is a supreme example for occurrence of janta svaras. Though all its svaras occur as janta svaras in the three octaves, flowing in and around the phrases, this is a raga where janta svaras, especially G, are starting notes in a composition.

Mohanam's sancharas travel in varied routes and amenable to endless combinations.

Some of its sancharas : gpdśDP, dPdG, gdpgrS, srD dśrG, ggppddŚ, dgśśdp, dśśdp, dgśG, śrġpġś, dśśdśdpdgprS, grr-pgg-dpp, śśdśpdg

Mohanam's svaras provide for plenty of combinations; still it cannot slide down from P to R without a kandippu G in a phrase. This however does not apply to patterns skipping a note like śp-dg-pr or dsP-pdG-gpR.

It may be pertinent here to note a remark of Dr. R.S. Jayalakshmi (Page 34 of Ragalakshanathil Arohana Avarohanam) that a raga not having a closely allied vakra raga with similar svaras and gamakas, may not have restrictions in its sancharas. There is no vakra raga with the same svaras taken by Mohanam.

The Starting Point of Mohanam

A raga is a distinct, delicate musical entity with fine subtleties and compositions serve as containers of the melodic abstract of the raga. The raga is presented through varied musical forms – Gitam, Varnam, Kriti, Svarajati, Padam, Javali, Thillana, etc. besides manodharma forms – Ragam, Tanam, Neraval, Svarakalpana.

The raga – be it in any form, is approached with a vital phrase, that unequivocally establishes its identity. The initial phrase gives a glimpse of the raga. The first (commencing) svara of this phrase is its starting point.

'Graha Svara' is the term, used to indicate the note on which melodies in a raga can commence. The term 'Graha', has been described as one of the lakshanas of jatis mentioned in Bharatha's period. In the lakshana of raga, one particular svara (for many ragas, it is Sa), is specified as 'Graha' by ancient musical texts. This practice was continued by later texts also upto 19th century. In mid-20th century, Musicologist P. Sambamurthy defines the term 'Graha Svara' as the commencing svara of melodies and gives the Graha Svaras for various ragas while elucidating on their lakshana and adds that a raga may have plural graha svaras. While all ancient texts never fail to comment on 'Graha', today's texts on Raga lakshana may or may not include the aspect of Graha Svaras for ragas.

The subject of this article - Mohanam's starting point, is discussed in the connotation of Commencing Svara in musical forms. Though the commencing svara is a single note, a single note cannot represent a phrase but a concord of other svaras constitute a wholesome commencing phrase. The commencing svara in a composition or its sections asserts itself with conviction, while adjoining with the winding note (ending note of sections, viz. Anupallavi / Charanam) and when kalpanasvaras are sung at that particular point.

For this study, kritis of Thyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar (as we do not have a composition of Syama Sastri in this raga), varnams and kritis of few other eminent composers, have been taken up in kalpitam and rendering of Raga, Tanam by professionals in manodharmam. The starting phrases of kritis/varnams have been given in Appendix.

Kalpitam

- ◆ Mohanam mostly has S, G, Ś as starting points in compositions, with D's occurrence to a minimum and P very rarely. Mohanam has both S and Ś (Madhya and Tara) occurring as commencing svaras. There are however some ragas where the svara – Sadjam in a particular octave dominates as a commencing svara in compositions (Eg: Tara Ś in Pantuvarali, Arabhi; Madhya S in Nilambari)
- ◆ G is the supreme commencing svara for Mohanam. To quote some examples :
Varaveena - gitam
Ninnukori – varnam (Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar)
Ninne korinadira – Varnam (Pallavi Duraisami Iyer)
Bhavanuta (Thyagaraja)
Evarura (Thyagaraja)

Mati matiki (Thyagaraja)

Rama ninu namminanu (Thyagaraja)

Rama Rama Rama (Thyagaraja)

Kadambari priyayi (Dikshitar)

Narasimhagacha (Muthuswami Dikshitar)

Kamalajasya – Ragamalika (Svati Tirunal)

Mohana srungara (Papanasam Sivan)

Soundarya (Papanasam Sivan)

Kapali (Papanasam Sivan)

Bhuvanathraya (GN Balasubramaniam)

- ◆ G as a commencing svara occurs as a plain note.

- ◆ Mohanam sometimes has janta svaras GG as commencing svaras. Some examples are :

Varaveena - gitam

Ninnukori adhi tala Varnam of Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar starts its sections - Pallavi, Anupallavi, Charanam with janta svaras.

Pallavi – GG R; , Anupallavi – GG P; ,

Charanam – GG gpgr rgpg P; ,

Bhavanuta – kriti

Bhuvanathraya – kriti

Mati matiki - kriti

It may also be observed (from the appendix) that both janta svaras have separate sahithya syllables. That is to say, there is no vowel extension for the second double.

- ◆ G as a commencing svara leads the melody route both ways - up and down.

When the melody slides down as GRS or GS, this G necessarily takes the touch (anusvara) of R. R here exists in the form of kandippu gamaka.

Eg : Rama ninu namminanu of Thyagaraja

(r) G, (r) S S, rrsS, d S, R grG

ra manin nu

Soundarya vellandanil of Papanasam Sivan

(r) G, R, S R, S, D S
soun darya vellandanil

- ◆ Next to G, S (both octaves) is a prominent starting svara for Mohanam. The melody progression from S and Ś is both ways – up and down.

It moves SD srG/SRG and śṛḡṛŚ/ŚDP.

- ◆ G and S, while occurring as commencing svaras in a composition, are quite easy to handle. This is so because G and S converge crisply with the winding svaras R and D respectively that sound with a beat (nokku), to again start brightly.

- ◆ P occurs rarely as a starting note in Pallavi but occurs frequently in other sections – Anupallavi and Charanam.

Papanasam Sivan, has composed a kriti starting with the note P (Narayana), besides using G in most of his compositions.

P; gpgr S D, SrG, G,
Nara yana divya

- ◆ D as a starting note occurs more frequently in other sections (Anupallavi / Charanam) than in Pallavi.

- ◆ The not-very-common occurrence of P as a starting point in Pallavi of compositions calls for some thoughts.

- Firstly, the winding note for such beginning has necessarily to be G. D as a winding note may not be very appropriate.

- The svara P is a fixed note and not subjected to any gamaka. The winding note G does not oscillate while landing at P. Both these notes have no link but pronounced separately – in other words G and P are sung without a connection.

- Also a glide from G to P is not commonly heard.

Here are a few ragas having a purvanga of srgp and which also take antara gandharam (and without Madhyamam) – Bauli, Hamsadhvani, Malayamarutham, Revagupti, Kalagada. In these ragas also, G is most commonly found as a starting note. Even if P occurs as a starting note in a kriti in these ragas, there is no link between the ending note-G and starting note-P and they sound plain and cut from each other.

Syama Sastri's kriti – Parvati in Kalagada though starts with P has the winding note of S.

A glide from antara G to P when Panchamam is the starting note, is not heard.

- In charanams of compositions that start with P, the melodic phrase many a times proceeds as : PPPP / PDP / PGPP / PP grG / PGPD / Pdp pgG (within a close circuit area). The flow of melody starting with P in charanams of kritis / varnams and with G as winding note in a Chittasvaram or Neraval or Svarakalpana, may yield for crisp eduppu (start). This is so because of the melodic route of the starting phrase. Eg. Veenai Kuppai's ata tala varnam (starting with D in Pallavi)

The charanam's melody proceeds as PGP;P and the line ends as dpgrg srg. Pan ta

The endings of chittasvaras are : (i) DSRG (ii) dšrg (iii) dšrgg

Such type of construction is not a common feature in the Pallavi of a composition.

◆ Utsava sampradaya kirtanas of Thyagaraja in Mohanam, such as Dayarani, mati matiki, Jayamangalam,

have different melodic tunes of the raga.

◆ Diksitar's kriti – Rakta Ganapathim, according to written text, starts with svara R having G as anusvara (^oR;SR G P D;;). There also prevails a practice of rendering the kriti starting with S (SRG gr GPD), which may take the anusvara of R.

◆ Svaras in our music mostly are not sung in their sthana and are in a fluid state of existence and the same svara may assume different magnitudes within the musical piece under different conditions. The kriti - Mohana Rama is stated to start as from S, by notation texts.

;SD; S R; G;
mo hana

It is common to hear the sahithyaksara Mo(hana) being sung with a twist. The sahithyaksara Mo(hana) is heard as : SD, rsSD, grSD as though D sounding as main note with anusvaras of R and S. Also the winding notes of Pallavi, Anupallavi/Charanam are grsr and not a mere gr. srD is a characteristic phrase of Mohanam. Even while kalpanasvaras are woven for Mohana Rama line, the svaras mostly end as grsr (Mohana...) Though the starting point here is S, the svara D assumes more prominence.

This type of start is akin to Syama Sastri's svarajati-Kamakshi in Bhairavi, that starts in mandra N.

N,; D,;; P,;;
Ka ma kshi

All svarasahithyams proceed with the starting notes - from S to Ś in arohana karma. 6 svarasahithyams of the svarajati end with the svara R [Endings are : Sr, NGr, pmgr, Pmgr, Gr, mGrgr) to start at N, while two end with S. However, the commencing note N takes

the anusvara of S in all the svarasahithyams ending with R, with a twist from R to N via S. (like rsSN / SrsN / SrsSN).

◆ Enduko Baga teliyadu of Thyagaraja starts its first phrase with Ś and ends with Ś.

;ŚPŚ P Ś;
en duko

When the starting point of any raga is a tarasthayi svara, the melody course generally comes down but here the phrase ends with tara Ś itself after touching higher notes. This is a unique, uncommon feature.

Manodharmam

The concept of starting phrase is in a raga alapana is more important than in a kriti. This serves as the introduction to a raga. Raga alapana is sung first followed by the kriti.

The range and scope for raga alapana are vast. There exists tradition descended over years in commencement and expansion of raga. In raga alapana, it is imperative that the initial phrase is a raga ranjaka prayoga imprinting the stamp of the raga. Though a musician has freedom in this area, the general trend for the starting points of Mohanam in manodharma raga alapana favours the svaras, G and D.

◆ G is a vital starting svara not only for kalpitam but manodharma raga alapana as well. Raga alapana in Mohanam is quite often started with the note - G. The initial phrase starting with G may proceed as :

gpdŚ śdrś DP
gP(g)RS sdršDP
gdp gRS srD dšrG
(r)G RS sq sRG

The initial phrase may also start with D, which may proceed thus :

DP pDp grG / DP dG gpDpgR
d[dp(g)RS

◆ Tanam in any raga has very limited starting points. It could be said that as a standard format, tanam generally starts with the customary note of a raga which is also a Purvanga svara. And a dhirga svara. Tanam of Mohanam mostly starts with G. It may also start with S.

Though raga alapana is much wider than kalpitam forms, it is kalpitam that has more starting points than manodharma raga alapana.

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Starting phrases of melodies in Mohanam

Thyagaraja	Bhavanuta - Adi	G G grR srG bhava nuta
Thyagaraja	Daya Rani Daya Rani Adi Divyanama	d P G,R ss d SrG dayarani
Thyagaraja	Enduko Baga Teliyadu Adi	;ŚĠĠ RŚ; en duko
Thyagaraja	Evarura Ninuvina - Triputa	;GPD d rŚ; evaru ra
Thyagaraja	Mati Matiki Deipavalena - Triputa	::G GRGPD mati mati
Thyagaraja	Mohana Rama - Adi	;SD; S R; G; mo hana
Thyagaraja	Nanu Palimpa - Adi	;g d p Gr S d p D d srgr gpG; nanupa lim
Thyagaraja	Rama Ninu Namminanu Adi	G, r S S, r rs S, d S, R grG ra ma
Thyagaraja	Rama Rama Rama - Triputa -Divyanama	;G R S; R; G, G, P; ramara ma ra ma
Thyagaraja	Veda Vakyamani - Triputa	::srG; GRGP; veda
Thyagaraja	Jaya Mangalam - Jampa - Divyanama	GRG; G P; jayamangalam
Dikshitar	Kadambaripriyayi - Misra Chapu	G; D; P; gRS; kadamba ri
Dikshitar	Nagalingam Namami - Adi	Ś; Ś ś d r s d p P d p G nagalin gam
Dikshitar	Narasimhagacha - Misra Chapu	GP; D; Ś; DP narasimha
Dikshitar	Pahimam Parvati - Rupaka	Ś s d r s DP pa himam
Dikshitar	Rajagopalam Bhajeham - Rupaka	Ś; Ś r s d p dg p d r s d p gpgrsr G ra ja go pa lam
Dikshitar	Rakta Ganapatim Bhajeham - Adi	°R; S R GPD;; raktha ganapatim
Dikshitar	Gopika Manoharam - Adi	Ś; Ś D; P G Gopika mano
Lakshya Gitam of Venkatamakhi	Shri Kaliyuga Venkateshu - Rupakam	Ś d p gp D s d r r ss Srikaliyuga
Gitam	Varaveena	GG P; P; vara veena
Govindasami	Varnam - Sariga Dhani - Adi Talam with Svara Sahithyams	::SRG; grGP; P; sariga da
Veenai Kuppavarnam	Varnam - Ata Talam - Sarasijakshi	(S d srgG) dpp GrR a sara si
Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Iyengar	Varnam - Ninnu kori - Adi	G G R; ssrr ggrr ninnuko
Pallavi Duraisami Iyer	Varnam - Ninne Korinadira - Adi	GPG, r R; ssrrgRs d grrss Ni nne ko ri na

Kavi Mathru Bhoothaiah	Inti Cakkadana Mintanta - Padam Adi	Gpg rs d p d Ssrgg G in ticakkadhana
Svati Tirunal	Ragamalika-Kamalajasya Adi - Starts with Mohanam	;g p gRsS; kamala
Svati Tirunal	Pangaja Nabho - Misra Chapu	::gp gR, S; sD S; R; G;; pan ka ja na bhotsava
Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar	Badrakali Namostute - Adi	;D; S d P d pgrsd srG RG badraka li na mos tute
Mysore Vasudevachar	Raa Raa Rajeeva - Adi	Ś;; D;; P, d S D; P GRSR G; G; Raa Raa Raa jeeva
Arunacala Kavirayar	En Palli Kondirayya	Ś, D, P; gdp Grsr G; en palli
Pallavi Gopala Iyer	Sri Rama Ramaniya - Adi	S; srG; rg P; Sri ra ma ramani
Purandara dasar devarnama	Bide Ninna - Adi	;d S d P pgdp grS bide ninna
Walajapet Venkatramana Bhagavathar	Radha Ramana - Adi	;S; D s RG, Radha ramana
Papanasam Sivan	Narayana Divya Namam - Adi	P; gpgr S D, SrG, G, Nara yana divya
Papanasam Sivan	Mohana Srungara - Adi	Gpd śPG, r s r s d r r r mohana srungaramurthi
Papanasam Sivan	Soundarya - Adi	G, R, S R, S, D S soundarya vellandani
Papanasam Sivan	Kapali - Adi	G; gP, gR, S; kapali
GN Balasubramanian	Sada Palaya - Adi	Ś, D, P;; grG sadapa
GN Balasubramanian	Bhuvanathraya - Adi	G G P; bhuvana
Thiruppavai	Nayakanaai Nindra Nandagopa - Adi	;sRgG G G na yaka naai nindra
Tiruppugazh	Eru Mayil eri - Kanta Chapu	srgg g Gggg e rumayil eri vilai

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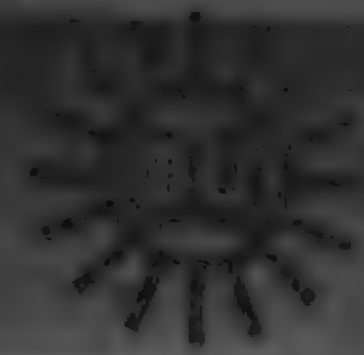
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KUNNAKUDI VAIDYANATHAN A TRIBUTE TO MY GURU

by Geetha Raja

Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan's foray into the world of music reads like a dramatic scene from a film and he would often quote it in his interviews probably as an inspiration to would be aspirants of music to reiterate that God's ways are inscrutable. The violinist playing regularly for his sisters Subbulakshmi and Sundaralakshmi did not turn up for a concert at his native place Kunnakudi and his angry father vowed to make Vaidyanathan a great violin vidwan. The young lad of nine learnt from his father, practised assiduously for a year and had the wonderful opportunity to accompany the celebrated musician and his father's friend, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, in a concert very soon! He started accompanying stalwarts like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Madurai Mani Iyer, S.Balachander and M.K.Thyagaraja Bhagavathar.

Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan played a key role in transforming the violin from a supporting instrument or pakka vadyam to a solo instrument or pakkaa vadyam. Through adapting a different and revolutionary cut-bowing and fingering technique which gave importance to proper enunciation of sahitya, he was able to bring the words of the songs before the audience - this requisite was important in the film songs he played and through which he garnered mass adulation. Through his sheer mastery over the instrument and his exceptional mike sense, he was able to cater to huge audiences, especially all over the four southern States of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. Between 1974 and 1985, he presented the unique thavil and violin combination of Kunnakudi - Valayapatti with

concerts mounting to more than three thousand in those ten years!

He was one of the musicians who took Carnatic music to the rural areas and even an illiterate villager could identify him and empathise with him. He travelled far and wide, visiting most countries in the world, like Singapore, Malaysia, Srilanka, Europe, the Middle East, Australia and so on. Cheerful by nature, he reinforced this quality in his performances and said that one has to communicate joy and happiness through music.

Being the Secretary for the Thyagaraja Mahotsava Sabha at Thiruvaiyaru continuously for twenty five years was a rare achievement and he considered it a benediction from Thyagarajaswami himself. Serving at Thiruvaiyaru was a cause extremely dear to his heart and he has often related stories of how he collected funds for the annadhanam and the successful conduct of the Uthsavam. Kunnakudi Sir's association with All India Radio is well known, where as a music composer, he was invited to compose music for more than thirty Vadya Vrinda programmes, many of which won awards. He took up special themes like Manushyathvam, Makara Jyoti, Bharathi Dasan's Kudumba Vilakku and Kannadasan's songs about the twelve Tamil months.

In the realm of devotional music, he composed the music for hundreds of songs



and was music composer for more than fifty films, starting with A.P.Nagarajan's Vaa Raja Vaa in 1968.

It was my good fortune that he accepted me as a disciple in vocal music five years ago and introduced me to a whole new world of ragas and swaras. Because it was instrumental music, listening to him playing on the violin developed my swara gnanam and I was able to perfect my skills in notating songs. It was a delight to watch him compose and teach the vocalist - it could be a devotional song or lyrics for a dance drama - the composing was all on the spot. There would be a harmonium and a tabla giving constant melodic and percussive accompaniment throughout the session and other members of the orchestra would also listen in. While composing, Kunnakudi Sir would write the background music extremely fast, in musical shorthand and usually an assistant would dictate it to the various instrumentalists in the orchestra. Sometimes the songs and the instrumental background music would all be recorded in the studio the same day - it was a very interesting and educative experience.

Just as my swara gnanam benefitted, my exposure to ragas like Shanmukhapriya and Abheri, and audava light ragas like Shivananjani, Rathipathipriya and Revathi increased and my musical horizons widened. I was able to appreciate Tamil lyrics much better and I had access to information on yesteryear music and musicians. It was a real pleasure to watch him teach young violin students with patience and a fantastic sense of humour. While teaching, Kunnakudi Sir would always emphasize the importance of maintaining kalapramanam or tempo, - that is, a Muthuswami Dikshithar slow paced song and a Thyagaraja fast paced Krithi should

be sung in the appropriate kalapramanam respectively - which would bring out the beauty in the compositions.

In the Raga Vaibhavam programmes conducted over the last five years under the auspices of the Raga Research Centre, he would point out the lyrical and structural subtleties in the songs sung by the participating artistes and awaken in the listener a thirst to find out more about the intrinsic excellence of these compositions. By means of the Raga Vaibhavam programmes, he explored the compositions of the Carnatic music trinity and other vaggeyakaras, which formed the basis of his research into the raga. He believed that the raga was a "devathai" and was convinced that ragas could cure rogas or ailments. In the year 1993, with a panel of doctors, vedic scholars and musicians, he discussed the therapeutic values of music and patented the findings for Anandabhairavi - a cure for hypertension and blood pressure and Shankarabharanam - a raga which soothes and restores peace and harmony in the body.

Kunnakudi Sir exemplified Thomas Carlyle's dictum, "Work is worship" and said often, "Thozhilukku mariyadai kodukkanum". He spoke to his students about his practising days when he used to do "riyaz" for hours at a stretch without thought of food or sleep and the rich dividends it paid him.

Notwithstanding his image as a top performer and a busy administrator, he was accessible to all and a very down to earth human being who had a kind word and a smile for everybody. His passing away on 8th Sep. 2008 marks the end of a glorious chapter in the annals of violin playing. May the soul of this genius rest in peace and may he shower his blessings on all seekers in their quest for excellence in music. □

IN SEARCH OF RECOGNITION

by G. Swaminathan

A few years ago when I was conversing with a very senior veteran musician I asked a question 'Why with all your knowledge are you not very popular and are always keeping a low profile?' Pat came the reply: 'Probably I am not smart enough'. But, the veteran musician was smart enough to maintain the conviction and dignity of the art learned. The fact remains that particular artist is respected even today for the wealth of knowledge and the tradition the musician adheres to.

In present day milieu, 'smartness' is one important and main attribute needed to be in the music field (or any field for that matter). In music it becomes all the more essential because one cannot be just happy to be among the several artists but everyone nurtures the aspiration to be popular and well known.

What makes one popular? Is it only through the opportunities to perform? It is true that for any performing artist, a platform is needed to showcase the talents. Therefore, intentionally or unintentionally the organizers as well as the sponsors become indispensable for the promotional activities. If so how to bag these opportunities?

Once I posed a query to a young vocalist who is good in his performance; 'Why haven't you marketed yourself for more chances?' He sheepishly grinned and replied: 'I am sending my bio data to all sabha secretaries. Beyond that what am I supposed to do? I really don't know' was

his rather innocent reply. Will just posting a bio-data to a sabha secretary help? The secretary may receive hundreds of such bio briefs and may not be sure about the abilities the artists claim unless otherwise he hears him/her perform. So what is the best way? The artist can probably send a demo CD or cassette so that the secretary or a committee, which screens the applications in a sabha can hear and make a decision. Wait. I am not very sure whether these city sabhas keep a committee like that or not. But anyway, if they don't, they can think of having one to meet the growing demands.

On many instances, the organizers go through the reviews appearing in newspapers and magazines and choose the artists for offering an opportunity. The gurus invariably help their disciples by recommending them for concerts if they feel the disciples are matured enough to perform on stage.

But in any case, the organizers or the gurus can take them only to the stage. Once on the stage, it is the talent of the artist that attracts the audience. If the performer does well, the name automatically goes around among the connoisseurs and thereby to the organizers, attracting more offers. Those who get an opportunity should also exploit it well; the choice of ragas and songs, presentation method, stage manners, depth of understanding, time management all these play major roles in captivating the audience. Nevertheless, it is lamented that

under present circumstances some of the artists resort to unsavory techniques to get a chance. But how long can that work? Continuing such unethical methods will not only be counter-productive but also impractical in the long run for the performer.

There are many cases where a budding artist gets the recognition because of the special or unique quality they exhibit. To cite an example, those who have tried Carnatic in western instruments have become very popular. There are two different notable instances in recent times; one young singer blended fine carnatic music with the art of Harikatha and became a rage overnight. Another youngster had demonstrated a rare feat of performing seven instruments apart from vocal to draw the attention of the public to impress his dedication to classical music. One has to wait and see for the response to his show.

Public relations have become an indisputable and integral part of any profession now because all the fields are highly competitive. A good voice alone is not enough or sending the curriculum vitae to organizers may not suffice. A personal

tête-à-tête is essential to impress organizers with one's abilities.

Further, in the initial stages the performers have to necessarily compromise on remuneration. I agree that it is quite unfair to make someone perform for two long hours for a few rupees or a 'coconut shell' (*thenga moodi*). But art sells only if it is ripe, matured and magnetic. It is therefore, imperative that growing artists should necessarily build along with the talents, a rapport with the organizers and public; the former through personal communication and with the latter through their competent and impressive performances. They should strive to add some special appeal to their music and make an impact on the listeners through their sincere attempts.

I could hear a voice from a distance 'for how long?'

Please wait; talent will never go unrecognized. All that glitters may not be gold. The audience is smart enough to differentiate the best from the mediocre and bad. Remember the first paragraph of this article. □

CONGRATULATIONS

- Aditya, 7th year student of our Sangeeta Vidyalaya has won the junior CCRT scholarship for Carnatic music, and what's more, he is the only junior from Mumbai who has received it this year! Congratulations to Aditya and his gurus!
- Rohit Prasad, student of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya, trained by Vidwan Shri T.S. Nandakumar, has won 2nd prize in AIR music competition 2008 in both mrudangam and moharsing.

REPORT

Public Condolence Meeting for Dr K. S. VARADACHARY

by Nalini Dinesh



A public meeting was convened by the Sabha to condole the sad and sudden demise of Dr. K.S. Varadachary on 31st October 2008. Dr. Varadachary was member of the Board of Trustees of the Sabha from 1999-2000 till date, member of the Managing Committee between 1989-90, 1992-93, 1995-96, to 1997-98, 1999 till date, Chief of the Medical Services of the Sabha for an unbroken period of 21 years from 1987 and the lifeline of the Sabha's Medical Centre.

The meeting began with a Sangeethanjali by Smt. Shruti Sadolikar, accomplished Khayal singer of the Jaipur-Atrauli gharana and Shanmukha Sangeeta Shiromani awardee. She was accompanied by Shri Parag Koli on the tabla and Shri Jayant Phadke on the harmonium. Avanti Walvekar gave vocal support and tanpura artistes

were Saakshi Patil, Teja Kale and Manasi Desai.

The Sangeethanjali was followed by a video, showing glimpses of Dr. Varadachary's contributions to healthcare and the field of medicine. A number of dignitaries then shared their memories and impressions of the good doctor, beginning with representatives of the sabha, President Shri V. Shankar and Shri S. Venkiteswaran, Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees. Members of the medical fraternity followed, namely, Prof. M.M. Sharma, Retd. Director of UDCT, Dr. Arun Rao of the General Practitioners' Association, Dr. F.D. Dastur, Senior Physician at Hinduja Hospital and Dr. V.C. Talwalkar, Retd. Prof. Grant Medical College and Founder Trustee of Society for Service to Voluntary Agencies (SOSVA). Shri Manjunathiah of Mysore

Association also spoke on this solemn occasion. Smt. Jamna Varadachary, in turn responded to the heart-felt condolences expressed.

A condolence resolution was read and adopted and homage was paid to Dr. Varadachary with one minute's silence.

An extract of the President V. Shankar's speech follows:

Alongwith the Sabha's founding fathers, Dr. Varadachary was instrumental in creating a unique institution that merges culture with healthcare. Culture is not a stagnant pool nor does it confine itself only to Art. It is only when the mind is healthy and at ease, that all forms of Fine Arts express themselves fully, and a healthy mind is possible only with a healthy body. This was the greatest gift of the doctor and founding members of the Sabha to this great city.

His was a life that was devoted to the cause of healthcare for all, one who stretched beyond the call of duty and took it unto himself to reach out to people in distress. He cared little for what was given to him as professional fees. What was given based on the capacity of the afflicted was received by him with great affection.

"Today we treat diseases instead of promoting health." According to Dr. Varadachary, preventive medicine is health-oriented, whereas curative medicine is disease-oriented. He advocated the former with conviction and example even if it may seem a politically incorrect stand to others. Pharmaceutical companies will certainly not applaud a stand that will cut into their profits. Young medical graduates dreaming of super specialties will simply not understand

such theories. But, the man who has healed millions of sick people stood firm in his conviction that disease should be prevented at all costs instead of being treated after its onset.

A Past President of the Association of Physicians of India, he was also at the helm of affairs as the President of the Cardiological Society of India. Hypertension Society of India gained intellectually through his association and he remained its Vice-President for a long time. In addition to his academic interests, Dr. Varadachary was also involved in contributing several chapters to APA textbook of medicine and was its Section Editor. His passion for academics took him all over the country and he lectured on a wide variety of subjects. His address on Genetics was received with great interest.

Dr. Varadachary stood as a champion for ethics in medical practices and unwaveringly spoke for what was morally right and condemned that which would hurt the weak and the defenseless. Dr. Varadachary was no idle preacher. He was deeply involved in voluntary health services as the Founding Trustee of the Nirmalya Health Foundation which took care of health of slum children and child labour, and trustee of SOSVA (Society for Services to Voluntary Agencies) which imports surplus medical supplies and equipments from the west and distributes it free to charitable hospitals in India.

Dr. Varadachary has left this world far better than it was when he was born. This common man's doctor will always remain in the hearts and minds of his fellow beings.

□

Book review

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND GHARANA TRADITION

by Sakuntala Narasimhan

Indian Classical Music and Gharana Tradition

by Professor R.C.Mehta

Readworthy Publications Pvt. Ltd.,
A-18, Mohan Garden, Near Nawada Metro
station, New Delhi 110059

252 pages, Price Rs 780

Music Education and Other Essays

by Professor R.C.Mehta

Published by Sanjay Prakashan,
JMD House, Murari Lal St., Ansari Rd,
New Delhi - 110002.

72 pages. Price Rs 200

At the age of 89 Professor R.C.Mehta, founder of the Indian Musicological Society, long-term editor of the Society's Journal, and former head of the department of music at M.S. University, Baroda, has had three of his books published as hardback editions. Two of them are reviewed here. Both are collections of essays on various aspects of Indian music -its roots, history, the guru-shishya parampara, gharanas (of Hindustani music) and the contemporary musical scene. Most of them are also papers presented by him at various seminars and conferences over the years

The first book (on Gharana tradition) consists of 12 chapters, focusing on topics like the state of archival music, the search for excellence in music, and the value of compositions (cheeza or bandish) in Hindustani music. The opening chapter is

on the impact of Indian philosophy and thought on Indian music. This is particularly appropriate since the overriding goal in Indian music has spiritual overtones and music is often part of religious rituals. The treatment throughout is scholarly, offering much food for thought. Researchers in particular will find strands of observations that could well be taken up for further investigation (for instance, his comments on why newfangled ragas may not always be of abiding value, compared to those that have a classical history. In this context he takes note of some Carnatic ragas that have been incorporated into the north Indian corpus).

One chapter is on the famous Sufi musician of yesteryear, Hazrat Inayat Khan who was a pioneer in terms of taking Indian classical music to Europe. Incidentally, his uncle was reportedly proficient in both Hindustani and Carnatic styles, and Inayat Khan too learnt both styles – this was during the early 20th century, when he travelled not only to Madras (as it was known then) but also to smaller centres like Tiruchi, Madurai, Kumbakonam and Tanjavur, whereas the popular belief is that the two systems got exposed to each other only after independence. Professor Mehta also calls Maulabux, grandfather of Inayat Khan, as the "founder of musical notation in India". Inayat Khan has also mentioned raga Kirvani in his publication of 1903, which means the south Indian raga had already "travelled north" more than a hundred years

ago. These are historically important nuggets of our cultural heritage.

Another chapter spotlights in detail the evolution of the Agra gharana, one of the popular (and leading) styles of the north of which the late Ustad Faiyaz Khan was considered an all-time great. The chapter on archives deals with the role of private agencies and government bodies (including All India Radio) in preservation and documentation. This has assumed importance in the post-independence years since the oral tradition that had marked the evolution of our music for centuries earlier had no access to technological facilities for preservation and propagation.

The role of melodic tension and also silence in music, other aspects that the chapters deal with, are also worth pondering over.

Lastly, the preface includes a very touching acknowledgement of the help that 89-year-old Professor Mehta received from his *elder* brother, including assistance in proof reading! What does one say, except an appropriate "Wah"?

The second book (on music education) is a slimmer volume with nine short essays dealing with music in education, role of

music in promoting harmony (an important topic in today's communal strife-torn milieu), role of music teachers, and the role of folk music in nation building (this topic too, is neglected because we think of only classical music whenever we focus on music as a discipline, forgetting that folk music too has an equally hoary and rich tradition, and it is this genre that can touch far more millions than classical music). Educationists in particular could benefit from some of the suggestions that Professor Mehta offers. Since most of these chapters (in both books) were delivered as keynote addresses or seminar papers, what Professor Mehta does is to throw up points for the listeners/participants to ponder over, and take up for further discussion and deeper pursuit. Incidentally, Professor Mehta was honoured by the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, one of the oldest cultural organisations in the country, for his lifetime contribution to music. Professor Mehta now in his 91st year, has just been chosen for the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan Award. This recognition of his contribution to music and musicology over more than half a century, was long overdue.

□



SABHA ROUND-UP

Report by Nalini Dinesh

Prof. T.V. Ramanujam Centenary Celebrations

*Ete Satpurushaaha Paraartha Katakaaha
Svaartham Parityajyame Saamaanyaastu Utthama Bhootaaha
Svaartham Virodhena Ye Te Api Maanusha Raakshasaaha
Parahiti Svaartham Nighnanti Ye Te Kena Jaaneemahe*

-Bhartrhari, philosopher-poet circa 5th century AD.

Translation: There is a first category of people, who do good to others even at the cost of their own good, they are the best among men, there are those who do good to others and also take care of themselves, they too are good, the third category of people are those who do good to themselves at the cost of others, they are nothing but human demons, the last category which we can't fathom are those that neither do good to themselves nor to others.

At the valedictory function of the five-day long centenary celebrations in September, of a man who belonged to Bhartrhari's first category, the founder-president of the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeeta Sabha, Prof. T.V. Ramanujam, President Shankar quoted this and from Charles M Schulz's Peanuts to drive home the point of these celebrations, namely remembering someone who did good for others at the cost of himself, whose care and compassion for people would touch countless lives and make an indelible impression upon them. Prof. T.V. Ramanujam was a multi-faceted personality whose career ranged through academic, media, corporate and cultural, with a stamp of professionalism and perfection in every facet. Motivated by Jawaharlal's Nehru's remarks in the early 1960s that the then Bombay did not have a



Release of Souvenir by Governor of Maharashtra
Shri S.C. Jamir

single place to hold huge gatherings like the AICC sessions and cultural programmes, Prof. T.V. Ramanujam and his band of workers collected a princely sum of thirty-five lakhs to build exactly such an auditorium and institution as desired by Pandit Nehru, and it was dedicated to society in 1963 by his sister and then Governor of Maharashtra, Smt Vijayalaxmi Pandit. An orator par excellence and one who didn't rest on his laurels, Prof. T.V. Ramanujam was an inspiration to many others.

Shri S.C. Jamir, Governor of Maharashtra presided over the function. Shri M.S. Bali, Chief Post Master General, Maharashtra Circle and Shri Sashi Ruia, Chairman, Essar Group were guests of honour. Prof. T.V. Ramanujam's son Shri R. Sampat and daughter Smt Saroja Saranathan were honoured on this occasion.

The valedictory function was rounded off with a shehnai recital by Ustad Nayyar Hussain Khan and brothers, sons of the late Ustad Bismillah Khan.



Smt. Visaka Hari's Harikatha

The first two days of the celebration featured Smt. Vishakha Hari, Harikatha exponent, who brought to life the legend of the Lord of Seven Hills (episode 1 - Sreenivasa Vaibhavam, episode 2 - Padmavathy Thirukalyanam) with the vivid brush strokes of her evocative singing and vibrant colours of her humour-laced narration.



Shri T. N. Seshagopalan in concert

Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan's concert on the third day dazzled one with its virtuosity. The masterly Todi alapana, neraval in Kamakshi the Navarasa phrase in the shloka Saayankaale Vanaante sung in nine ragas and the song on Ramanuja in Pantuvarali by Kanakadasa (which Shri Seshagopalan declared to be appropriate to the occasion of Prof. TV Ramanajum's centenary) were sparkling highlights.

A photo exhibition of Shri T.V. Ramanujam and release of a postal cover formed part of the centenary celebrations.

Best Teacher Award

Presentation of Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Best Teacher Award was the third part of the centenary celebrations and in this special year, it was awarded to Ganabhooshanam Shri P. Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. As President Shankar summed it up, this year, being the centenary of three doyens, Shri Semmangudi Srinivasaiyer, legendary musician of our times, Shri V. Narayanaswamy, former vice-president and long-time trustee of the sabha and Prof. T.V. Ramanujam, what could be more appropriate than the awardee being the disciple of one of the centenarians, and the centenarian also being the guru of a disciple after whose name this award has been named. Shri Shankar also emphasized on the uniqueness of the Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Best Teacher Award. It is quite common for organizations to honor performers. But it is rare to come across awards for those making innumerable sacrifices in order to



Shri Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar being conferred the Best Teacher Award by President Shri V. Shankar

mould these performers. This award also has a unique privilege attached to it, it is the only award permitted by Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi to be named after her. Shri Shankar pithily expressed the qualities of a good teacher thus: a teacher grooms and disseminates knowledge, a good teacher demonstrates, an excellent one inspires.

Shri P. Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar was born in Kollam Dist. Kerala state in 1921. He had his initial training in music from Vidwan Vaikom Krishna Iyer and later from Shri Neelakanta Bhagavathar, nephew of Sri Muthaiah Bhagavathar. He was among the first students at the Swati Tirunal Academy of Trivandrum. He was under the guidance of Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer during his later years at the academy and was awarded the Gana Bhooshanam at twenty. He won several laurels, notable among them being Young Performer Gold Medal of the Madras Music Academy. He travelled widely across Western Europe, North and South America for close to a year and was nicknamed London Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. He teaches, motivates and inspires. Numerous are his students who recall his zeal, patience and untiring effort to bring out the best in them and many students have become performers and teachers in their own right.

The award carried a citation, icon of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeeta Sabha, cheque for 25,000, a shawl, silver lamp and a floral crown.

Shri Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar was felicitated by a long list of his associates, admirers and students including MN Murthy, professor and head of violin at the Swati Tirunal Academy, Bhakta Rasika Ranjani sabha,

Bombay Andhra Maha Sabha and others.

The octogenarian awardee Shri Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar accepted the award with a characteristic self-effacing and endearing "Aneka Koti Namaskaram, I don't know how to speak, I only know how to sing"!

The award function was followed by a tribute to MS Amma by Mumbai-based vocalist Smt Lakshmi Rajagopalan. Her recital included compositions that have come to be associated with MS like Vadavaraiyai Matthaki, Bhavayami Gopalabalam, Jagadodhaarana, Kurai Ondrum Illai and Maitreem Bhajata.

World Music Day

World Music Day was celebrated on 4th Oct with a Hindustani vocal recital by Smt Kishori Amonkar with Ms. Nandini Bedekar and Ms. Tejashree Amonkar for vocal support. The other supporting artistes were Ms. Seema Shirodkar on the harmonium, Shri Milind Raikar on the violin and Shri Vishwanath Shirodkar on the tabla. It was a rare opportunity for sabha members to listen to the legendary singer, and the longish wait for the concert to begin and the half-hour gap in between was well worth the effort. Jhinjhoti was the main raga chosen.



Smt. Kishori Amonkar in concert

Annual Music-Dance-Drama Festival

The annual music-dance-drama festival of the sabha has been revived after 21 years and was held in Oct 2008 over six days. It provided a good mix of instrumental and vocal, Carnatic and Hindustani, and classical and light classical.

It was refreshing and fitting to begin the festival with the Nagaswaram, which is heard very less on the concert platform. The Nenmara Brothers (Shri Kannan and Shri Anand) from Kerala on the nagaswaram were accompanied by Shri Tanjavur Govindarajan on the tavil.

The next day it was a jugalbandi between Shri Viswamohan Bhatt on the Mohan Veena and Lalgudi Shri G.J.R. Krishnan on the violin. The programme began with solo pieces by each of the artistes. The raga to be taken up for collaboration was Puriya Dhanashree/Pantuvrali. Both the players sought to embellish each other's solo passages (rather tentatively, one thought) with soft touches. The sounds of the instruments meshed quite well. The mridangist Patri Shri Satishkumar and tablist Shri Ramkumar bolstered the collaboration beautifully.

Saturday saw the auditorium filled to the brim and overflowing with crowds to see Hema Malini performing the dance ballet Radha Krishna with her troupe. The ballet was in a light classical genre choreographed by Bhushan Lakhandri, with recorded music composed by Ravindra Jain.

T.V. Sankaranarayanan gave a fine concert on Sunday, accompanied vocally by his son Mahadevan, Mysore Shri Srikant on the violin, Shri R. Ramesh on the mridangam and Alathur Shri T.Raja Ganesan on the kanjira. The accent was more on bhava, though the usual kalpana swara fireworks were very much present. The main items were TVS

favourites Meevallagunadosha in Kapi and Ma Janaki in Kamboji. A Keeravani composition on the Kanchi Mahaperiyava Punniyam Oru Koti was sung with feeling.

The R.S. Manohar theatre legacy is being carried forward by his troupe V.N.S. Manohar theatres who staged the two classic plays Elangeswaran and Chanakya Sabadham towards the close of the festival.

Felicitations of Prof. T. N. Krishnan on his Eightieth Birthday

Prof. T. N. Krishnan was felicitated by the Sabha (alongwith other major music organizations of Mumbai) on 20th December, 2008 on the occasion of his Eightieth Birthday. Prof. T.N. Krishnan was presented with pooja offerings and brushed gold violins were presented to him and his children. The function was followed by his concert, accompanied by his daughter Viji Krishnan and son Sriram Krishnan.



Pt. Vishwamohan Bhatt and Shri G.J.R. Krishnan - Jugalbandhi



A scene from the play "Elangeswaran"

HAPPENINGS AT THE VIDYALAYA

Report by Nalini Dinesh

VAGGEYAKARA CELEBRATIONS

PAPANASAM SIVAN / OOTHUKAADU VENKATASUBBIER & GOPALAKRISHNA BHARATI DAY- 12th July, 2008

Smt. Mala Shankar, accompanied by her daughter Abhirami, gave a vocal recital exclusively of Oothukadu Venkatasubbier kritis. In fact, it was almost like a lecture-demonstration, due to the excellent introduction and wealth of information she gave, pertaining to each kriti rendered by her. She was very involved in the kriti-rendering, and prefaced the Bowli kriti and ragamalika composition (for the starting raga Hindolam) with alapana.

The first piece was *Kshanameva Ganyam Manye* with the theme of the koti punya accrued by devotees even with one second (kshanam) of thinking about the Lord.

This was followed by *Vande Nanda Soonum* in Kannada Maaruva (janya of Ramapriya) which had a distinctly Hindustani flavour. *Natavara Tharunee* in Kannadagowla had an interesting change of gati in the charanam from tisra to chaturasra gati. The anupallavi had a madhyama kalam passage too. The song, describing the dance of Krishna, was aptly ornamented with a number of jatis. The recital was rounded off with a ragamalika *Vandu Ketpaar Illayo*.

Sri Chidambaram, senior disciple of Sri T.S. Nandakumar, provided admirable mridangam support for Mala.

G. Krishnan (Shyam) provided violin support for all three artistes of the evening and Master Sudarshan Swaminathan

accompanied the next two artistes, Dilip and Prabha, on the mridangam. Ms Priya Rajeev compered the programme.

Shri K. Balakrishnan (Dilip) was the next participant, with the songs *Varugalaamo* (Manji) and *Vazhi Maraithurukkudu* (Natakurinji) of Gopalakrishna Bharati, *Tirupuramkundra* (Hindolam) and *Kaana Kan Kodi Vendum* (Kambhoji) of Papanasam Sivan and *Padmavati Ramanam* (Poorvikalyani) of Oothukkadu Venkata Subbier.

Smt Prabha Hari has a very good voice, capable of surprising clarity in her sangatis, even at the considerable speed she employs in her kriti rendition. Her recital spoke of a good pathantharam. The effect of her rendition would be enhanced with some sedateness. She sang the Sivan kriti *Kaa Vaa Vaa* well, but *Idadu Padam* of Gopalakrishna Bharati failed to make the mark. The other kritis were *Sri Vathapi Ganapatiye* (Sahana), *Karpaga Manohara* (Malayamaarutham) and *Ma Ramanan* (Hindolam) of Papanasam Sivan and *Sivakama Sundari* (Jaganmohini) of Gopalakrishna Bharati.

MUTHU THANDAVAR, ARUNACHALA KAVIRAYAR & OTHER TAMIL COMPOSERS' DAY - 9th August, 2008

Smt. Vijayalakshmi Rangarajan's voice is her asset, more attention to shruti alignment would enhance the quality of her rendition. She sang one shuddha madhyamam (Edaiya Gathi, Chala Nattai) and one prati madhyamam composition (Antharanga Bhakthi, Shadvidhamargini) of Koteeshwara



Smt. Vijayalakshmi Rangarajan

Iyer, *Adi Kondar* in Mayamalavagowla of Muthu Thandavar, *Aravinda Lochanane* in Neethimathi of Ambujam Krishna, *Saranam Saranam* in Asaveri of Arunachala Kavirayar and concluded with a Tiruppugazh *Vachanamiha* tuned to Ranjani raagam and set to Chatusra Jhampa taalam.

Shri Rajiv Ramakrishnan's recital was replete with bhava, powered by a good voice. He commenced with *Gananaadane* in Saranga of Periyasami Thooran, followed by an excellent alapana of Mohanam for the kriti *Jagadeeswari* of Tiruvarur Ramaswami Pillai, another Periyasami Thooran kriti *Muruga Muruga* in Saveri, an Ambujam Krishna composition in Kapi, *Aravinda Padamar*, and ended with Arunachala Kavirayar's Ramanataka kriti *Ramanukku Mannanmudi* in Hindolam.

Smt. Bhanumathi Sharma presented familiar kritis like *Shambho Mahadeva* (Bowli) of Neelakanta Sivan, *Yaro Ivar Yaro* (Bhairavi) of Arunachala Kavirayar, *Kaliyuga Varadan* (Brindavana Saaranga) of Periyasami Thooran, *Sri Chakra Raja* of Agasthiyar, and the *Eru Mayil Eri* Tiruppugazh. Ambujam Krishna's ragamalika *Konjum Chilambolikka Krishna* was a novelty. Certain avoidable features of Bhanumathi's recital were the

kakali nishada in her Bhairavi outline and pmg prayogam in Bowli. Also, her choice of madhyama shruti for rendering the Tiruppugazh tuned in Mohanam was surprising.

Shri Manas Kumar on the violin and Shri Satish Krishnamurthy on the mridangam, supported the vocalists and the compere for the evening was Vignesh Gouthaman.

PT. VISHNU DIGAMBAR PALUSKAR & PT. VISHNU NARAYAN BHATKHANDE DAY - 20th September, 2008

Dr. Geetha Ravikumar presented a vocal recital commencing with a pleasing rendition of raag Purya Dhanashree. The bada khayal in Ek Tal was '*Bhala Bhala Jaaya*' and chota khyal in teen tal was "Payaliya Jhankar". This was followed by a chota khyal "*Jaare Jaa Jaare Kanhaiya*" and a taraana, both in raag Behag. The recital ended with a Meera bhajan in Desh raag Chalo Man Ganga Jamuna Teer, popularized by Shri Paluskar, rendered with feeling.

Geetha was supported by Shri Kaka Joglekar on the harmonium and Shri Rajan Singh Thakur on the tabla.

Shri Rajan Mashelkar presented a violin solo, accompanied by Shri. Jayesh Rege on the tabla. He played raag Yaman, followed by raag Janasammohini, a dhun and a bhajan. Rajan's systematic development of Yaman brought forth vivid memories of his guru D.K.Datar - indeed a worthy disciple of an illustrious guru!

The programme was compered by Ms. Lavanya Ananthanarayanan

Talent Exposure - 18 Aug 2008

Young Pradeeksha, 6th Year student of vocal Carnatic music, currently under the guidance of Smt Susheela Mani, made a confident start with the Kanada Ata Tala varnam, *Nera Nammiti*, save a couple of mishaps on talam and Muktajiswaram. The invocatory piece was the elegant Hamsadhwani kriti of Muthaiya Bhagavatar *Gan Ganapathe* preceded by a short and sweet alapana. The chittaiswaram in this kriti is notable, ending with GRSR, NPGP, GRSR. Dikshitar kriti *Parvati Kumaram* in Nattakuranji and Pallavi Gopala Iyer's Kalyani kriti *Needucharanamule* (with alapana) followed. Pradeeksha's neraval at *Om Jagajjanani* was reasonably clear and tuneful with good breath control. A bhajan in Kedar of Devaki Nandan Dhavan, *Darsana Do* and a touching shloka in Chenchurutti (wrongly announced as Nattakuranji by the performer!) and *Nenjil Uramumindri* of Bharatiyar in Chenchurutti ended the recital.

Pradeeksha needs to polish her kritis for flawless renditions and concentrate on akaaram for clarity in phrases. Also, the repeated mispronunciation of the word kiliye was jarring. More attention to pronunciation and correctness of kriti, raga, tala and composer announcements would make a well-rounded programme.



Pradeeksha M.

Smt. M.S. Suja (6th Year), currently training under Smt Radha Namboodiri, presented a vocal recital in the next slot. She started with the Dikshitar kriti *Vallabha Nayakasya* in Begada, followed by *Devi Neeye Tunai* in Keeravani. Suja sang Poorvikalyani alapana followed by the Dikshitar kriti *Kashi Vishalaksheem*. The kriti rendition (especially the beautiful ragamalika Sollavallayo Kiliye) was disappointing, considering Suja's mature alapana and error-free neraval and kalpana swaram. It would be decidedly brighter if more feeling were infused into it. Shruti alignment is another area needing attention.

Shri Vishwanath Ramaswamy and Shri Sangeeth Venkateswaran provided violin and mridangam support respectively.

22 Nov 2008

Sneha Ganesh and Dipitha Rao, VI year students of the Vidyalaya, currently under the tutelage of Ms Lalita Iyer, took the stage first and began with the Navaragamalika varnam by Patnam Subramania Iyer and followed it up with *Varavallabha Ramana*, a GNB kriti in Hamsadhwani and *Mantra Balam* in Hamsanadam. They then attempted an alapana in Mohanam with Sneha singing in lower and madhya sthayis and Deepita in tara sthayi, the kriti was *Rara Rajeeva Lochana* with kalpana swaras at Rara. This was followed by a ragamalika by Tiruvaroor Ramamurthy *Kannanidam Thoothu Selladi* and the ending piece was Kanchi Mahaswami's *Maitreem Bhajata*. The efforts of the young ones were countered by heavy shruti lapses, and Sneha's difficulty in reaching higher octave notes. Lots of practice and listening to good music will help them realize their true potential which glimmered through in their rendition of the

kritis.

Amit Krishnan who has completed the 7 year course at the Vidyalaya gave the second recital of the day. Starting with the Dikshitar kriti *Siddhi Vinayakam* in Shanmukhapriya, and continuing with *Marukelara O Raghava* in Jayantashri, he elaborated Poorvi Kalyani raagam before *Parama Pavana Rama*, a Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar kriti. Kalpana swaras were sung for this kriti, with a good kuraippu. A beautiful Reethigowla kriti of Meenakshi Sutar and the Ranjani Mala of Tanjavur Shankara Iyer rounded off his recital, which though melodious, needed clarity and azhuttham. The Poorvikalyani opening phrase was quite shaky and contained a GS usage, though the raga came into picture after that.

Smt Suguna Ramachandran provided violin support and Master Santosh Saikumar played the mrudangam for the vocalists.

NAVARATRI CELEBRATIONS

Saraswati pooja was celebrated at the Vidyalaya with a pooja on 8th Oct 2008, followed by a recital of Navavarana kritis by the disciples of Kalyani Sharma. They were accompanied by Vanamala Dixit on the violin and two mrudangists Rohit Prasad and Varun Ramaswamy, a disciple of Mannargudi Easwaran.

Vijayadashami was celebrated on the following day with a pooja, followed by rendition of the basic Carnatic lessons by all students and faculty. New admissions were commenced on this auspicious day. Around 210 new students were enrolled taking the total strength of the Vidyalaya to 411.

Muthuswami Dikshitar Day

All three concerts fittingly had songs on Lakshmi, to celebrate the Diwali season of

abundance and prosperity. The first recital began with *Varalakshmi* in Saurashtram and the last one ended with *Sri Varalakshmi* in Sree raagam!

The first performer Lavanya Kailash sang Shuddha Dhanyasi alapana followed by the kriti *Sri Parthasaarathi*. Chandrashekharam in Marga Hindolam was followed by an alapana in Mohanam for *Narasimha Agacha*. The Abhayamba Navaavarana kriti in Yadukula Kamboji and *Tripurasundari* in Sama rounded off her recital. More bhava-orientation with better shruti alignment, would have brought out the beauty of these compositions better.

Next, Priya Vishwanathan gave a melodious veena recital. *Sri Maha Ganapati* in Gowla was the invocation. Parandhaamavati in Dharmavati, *Hariharaputram* in Vasantha, *Sri Lakshmi Varaham* in Abhogi, *Meenakshi Memudham* in Poorvikalyani, all preceded by colourful snatches of the essence of each raga followed. *Shree Kamalamba* in Sri raagam was the final piece. Priya's alapanas and kriti renditions were full of bhava and sensitivity. More clarity and precision in fast sangatis and phrases and chittaiswarams would surely enhance her performance.

Smt Radha Balasubramaniam and Smt Vijaya Ramachandran gave a vocal recital with polished renditions of popular kritis *Vatapi Ganapatim* (Hamsadhwani), *Sree Guruguha* (Shuddha Saveri), *Matangi* (Ramapriya) and *Sree Varalakshmi* (Sree). There were detailed alapanas of Shuddha Saveri and Ramapriya.

Praveen Venkatraman provided violin accompaniment and mrudangist Devanand Menon handled the percussion support for the evening's programme, compered by Vimarshini Jairam. □



Sri Shanmukhananda

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